



ALS-MLA

American Literature Section of the
Modern Language Association

Annual Report, 2006

Compiled by
Sarah Robbins, Kennesaw State University

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American Literature Section Officers 2007

Chair: Sandra Zagarell (Oberlin College)

Executive Coordinator: Sarah Robbins
(Kennesaw State U)

ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Elected Members:

Frances Smith Foster (Emory U), 2005-07
Sandra Zagarell (Oberlin C), 2005-07
George Hutchinson (Indiana U), 2006-08
Caroline Levander (Rice U), 2006-08
Rachel Adams (Columbia U), 2007-09
Ralph Bauer (U of Maryland), 2007-09
Philip J. Barrish, ex-officio, immediate past chair (U of Texas, Austin)

Division Chairs:

American Literature to 1800

Dana D. Nelson (Vanderbilt U)

Nineteenth-Century American Literature

Patricia Crain (New York U)

Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century American Literature

Jonathan Auerbach (U of Maryland, College Park)

Twentieth-Century American Literature

John Wharton Lowe (Louisiana State U, Baton Rouge)

Black American Literature and Culture

Elizabeth Brown-Guillory (U of Houston)

American Indian Literatures

Robert Warrior (U of Oklahoma)

Asian American Literature

Daniel Y. Kim (Brown U)

Chicana and Chicano Literature

Rafael Pérez-Torres (U of California, Los Angeles)

(The chair, executive coordinator, and editor of *American Literature* are also members of the Advisory Council.)

ALS-MLA STANDING COMMITTEES:

Nominating Committee:

Joanna Brooks (San Diego State U), Chair
Ralph Bauer (U of Maryland)
Phil Barrish (U of Texas, Austin)

Hubbell Award Committee:

Viet Nguyen (U of Southern California), 2007 Chair
Wai Chee Dimock (Yale U), 2008 Chair
Douglas Anderson (U of Georgia), 2009 Chair
Dana Nelson (Vanderbilt U), 2010 Chair
Mary Loeffelholz (Northeastern University), 2011 Chair

EDITORIAL BOARD, *AMERICAN LITERATURE*

Priscilla Wald (Duke U), Editor
Ralph Bauer (U of Maryland, College Park), 2007
Claire F. Fox (U of Iowa), 2007
Karen Sanchez-Eppler (Amherst C), 2007
Michelle Stephens (Mount Holyoke C), 2007
Cheryl Wall (Rutgers U, New Brunswick), 2007
Leslie Bow (U of Wisconsin, Madison), 2008
Alan Golding (U of Louisville), 2008
David Leverenz (U of Florida, Gainesville), 2008
Samuel Otter (U of California, Berkeley), 2008
Shawn Michelle Smith (Saint Louis U), 2008
James Dawes, Macalester College (2009)
Laura Doyle, U of Massachusetts, Amherst (2009)
Gabrielle Foreman, Occidental College (2009)
Steven J. Mailloux, University of California, Irvine (2009)
Brook Thomas, University of California, Irvine (2009)

Report of the Chair

The Advisory Council of the MLA's American Literature Section met on December 27, 2006, at the Philadelphia Marriott Hotel. I include some highlights of the meeting in what follows but I also refer members to the detailed minutes taken by Executive Coordinator Sarah Robbins. Beginning this year, the ALS will now be including the Advisory Council minutes in its annual report.

At the meeting we discussed several substantive issues, including a trend over the past few years of declining membership in the Section. The membership declines correlates with Duke University Press having raised the subscription rate for *American Literature* (membership in the Section includes a subscription and is priced accordingly), as well as with the increasing online availability of the journal. It was pointed out, however, that the rate for graduate students is still relatively low at only \$25.00 per

year, which in addition to a journal subscription and direct online access to back issues also brings with it the latest volume of *American Literary Scholarship*. Current members are urged to renew their memberships and to consider recommending membership to colleagues and students. We also decided to give out forms and provide an explanation of membership benefits at the MLA sessions that we sponsor.

The importance of the American Literature Section consists not only in the MLA sessions it sponsors, the annual prizes it distributes, and its longstanding link to *American Literature*, but also in its service as an umbrella organization for the various MLA Divisions that relate to American literature and culture. Accordingly, the Advisory Council discussed what else we might do to help coordinate the work of the individual Divisions, if only to the extent of working to convene discussions between and among them. One idea that we will move forward on is trying to devise topics for our MLA sessions that might allow for overlap with sessions planned by the Divisions. Ideally, we would collaborate with Divisions early in the planning process to develop certain loosely linked clusters of sessions for the annual conventions. Such cross-Division collaboration would probably also increase both the papers submitted for and the attendance at each session. Two valuable suggestions made at this year's meeting were to invite not only current but also incoming Division chairs to future Advisory Council meetings as well as to use email earlier throughout the year to circulate ideas between the Section and the Divisions regarding session topics and other issues.

Incoming Chair Sandra Zagarell led a very productive discussion about session topics for the 2007 Convention. One session will be devoted to Networks and the other to Language. Descriptions follow. **Networks:** As Americanists build on keywords and move beyond binaries, we must address dynamic interrelationships—networks, ecologies, systems—characterizing the subjects we study and/or our methods of studying them. **Languages:** 1] What's at stake in Americanists' engagement or non-engagement with the languages spoken in America? and/or 2] what do current discourses (political, analytic, cultural) uncover, foreground, obscure? Details on proposal submission are available on the ALS-MLA website.

In addition to choosing Professor Zagarell as 2007 Chair, the Section's membership elected Ralph Bauer and Rachel Adams as new members of the Advisory Council. With advice from the Advisory Council, including the individual Division Chairs, Professor Zagarell will appoint the requisite new members to the Nominations committee, the Foerster Prize committee, and the Hubbell Award committee.

Our 2006 panels were titled Detention: Practices, Para-

digms and Detention and/as U.S. Literature. Both panels were well attended and sparked lively discussion. Liveliness continued at the cash bar following the second panel and then at the awards ceremony. The Foerster Prize for best article published in *American Literature* during 2006 was awarded to Jeff Allred for his essay, "From Eye to We: Richard Wright's 12 Million Black Voices, Documentary and Pedagogy." Caleb Smith was recognized with an honorable mention for his essay, "Emerson and Incarceration." The prizes were presented by Sara Blair, who had served as chair of the selection committee. Henry Lewis Gates, Jr. received the Hubbell Award for lifetime achievement, which was presented by Gordon Hutner, 2006 chair of the Hubbell committee. Professor Gates was unable to attend the convention this year, but he wrote an acceptance speech which was graciously read on his behalf by Professor Rudolph Byrd. Professor Gates's moving speech is available on the ALS website and in this report.

In closing, I wish to thank all those who served on ALS committees and/or on the Advisory Council during 2006, especially committee chairs Sara Blair (Foerster Prize), Gordon Hutner (Hubbell Award), and Caroline Levander (Nominating Committee). Above all, I wish to express gratitude on behalf of myself and the entire American Literature Section to Sheryl Meyering and Brian Abel Regan for their long and successful service as executive coordinators. I also very much appreciate Sarah Robbins's willingness to work with Meyering and Regan in the past year to learn the position and, now, to assume it on her own for 2007. As I have no doubt former chairs would agree, it is really the hard work of the Executive Coordinator(s) that keeps the ALS running.

Respectfully submitted,
Phillip J. Barrish



Report of the Hubbell Award Committee

The Jay B. Hubbell Award is given each year to a scholar who has made an extraordinary contribution to the study of American literature over the course of his or her career. The winner for 2006 was Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Members of the Hubbell Award Committee for 2006 were as follows:

Gordon N. Hutner (U of Kentucky), 2006 Chair
Viet Nguyen (U of Southern California)
Wai Chee Dimock (Yale U)
Douglas Anderson (U of Georgia)
Dana Nelson (Vanderbilt U)

Citation for Professor Gates from the Award Committee

December 28, 2006

This evening it is my pleasure to introduce the winner of the Jay Hubbell Medal for Lifetime Achievement in American Literary studies, the highest professional award that the American Literature Section of the MLA can give. This year's recipient is Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. of Harvard University, where he is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Professor of English, Chair of African and African American Studies, and the Director of W. E. B. Du Bois Research Center and who is known to so many of us as Skip. In awarding this prestigious medal to Professor Gates, the MLA is recognizing his superb accomplishments, indefatigable energy, and unsurpassed industry in the scholarship and criticism of American literature. His numerous books and articles, the whole range of production, however, cannot measure alone the gift he has bestowed on us, the gift of shaping—in large part defining—the contours of African-American literary studies in our time. Without Skip Gates, the literary historiography and criticism of African-American writing, over the last twenty-five years, would be remarkably different, remarkably poorer. The last quarter of a century has witnessed several great historians and critics of African-American literature, including former Hubbell Medal winner Houston Baker, the late Nellie McKay, and Arnold Rampersad, but none, I venture to say, has made so profound and lasting an impact on the way we identify, study, and teach African-American literature and culture than tonight's honoree.

It is one thing to help to make a subject, and its resources, vital to fellow professionals and students. Most of us would dare not even dream that our contri-

butions might extend so far. It is still another to make a whole country care about our subject discipline and to commit unprecedented resources to its scholarly pursuit and its popular appeal. And that, I believe, is what distinguishes Skip from the rest of us. Of course, he did not do so alone, for there have been very many others who have worked with him to give African-American literature its rightful recognition in the academy—in the critical and scholarly journals and academic presses, as the subject of innumerable symposia and conferences. Yet more than anyone else of his time, Skip Gates has taken African-American literary study out of the confines of the classroom and into the broad avenues of cultural understanding. As a critic, scholar, journalist, as an editor, bibliographer, historian, he has become a truly American scholar, what Emerson would call a "delegated thinker."

Please allow me, as is customary on these occasions, to review that career. While in rehearsing these bright lights, I will only summarize his accomplishments and, I hope, the way those achievements, in turn, summarize the field he has helped to construct. Indeed, the American Literature Section is not the first body to honor Skip: his awards include a MacArthur Foundation grant (1981), the George Polk Award for Social Commentary (1993), Time magazine's "25 Most Influential Americans" list (1997), a National Humanities Medal (1998), election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1999), the Jefferson Lecture (2002), and a Visiting Fellowship at the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton (2003-2004). I am afraid we are lagging just a bit behind in not having given Gates this medal sooner, considering that he has won more than 40 prizes over the last thirty years. He has also received 44 honorary degrees, from institutions like Penn, Dartmouth, Harvard, NYU, UMass-Boston, Williams, Emory, Toronto, and the University of Benin. He has served on numerous committees of local, national, and international importance, such as The College Board's National Task Force on Minority High School Achievement, the Advisory Board of the PBS Adult Learning Series, the ACLU Medal Selection Committee, the Scholars Council of the TransAfrica Forum, and the Pulitzer Prize Committee, among way too many others. He has also served or is serving on the Boards of Directors or Trustees for the Pen American Center, Whitney Museum, American Repertory Theatre, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Amistad Research Center, National Trust for the Humanities, New York Public Library, Museum of Afro-American History, the Studio Museum in Harlem, Jazz at Lincoln Center, among about 40 others. Skip has been the subject of some twenty interviews and is listed in 8 different Who's Whos. Over the last twenty-five years, Skip has served or is serving on the Board of Editors on no fewer than 30 academic

journals and more than a dozen other research and publishing initiatives. In many respects, Skip has already moved beyond our modest powers of conferring distinction.

What we can bestow on Skip is the recognition of grateful colleagues who perhaps better than all the eminent foundations and fellowships appreciate how much he has done, how lasting are his contributions, and how various his meritorious projects have been. Many of us in the audience are aware of the shape of Gates' career as it has unfolded for our own particular interests and so perhaps are not as cognizant as we might be of the ways that he has taken many of our concerns to the broader public through articles in the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, the *Village Voice*, the *Nation*, the *Washington Post*, *Time*, and even *Sports Illustrated*. Moreover, he has written profiles of figures as varied as James Baldwin, Wole Soyinka, Eldridge Cleaver and conducted dozens of interviews with figures like Spike Lee, Louis Farrakhan, and Kofi Annan.

Not too shabby for an English professor, even for one who took his undergraduate degree at Yale and then his graduate degrees at Clare College, Cambridge, where, under the supervision of Raymond Williams, he wrote his dissertation on Africans in 18th-century England. In doing so, he was beginning to discover and disclose the grounds for his future research and writing. The early years of Gates' career, roughly 1976 through 1981 see him moving away from his first writings as a literary journalist (in *Harpers* and the *Antioch Review*) and toward his first scholarly essays, including three contributions to the MLA book, *Afro-American Literature: The Reconstruction of Instruction* by Stepto and Fisher in 1979. By 1981, he was contributing essays to the *Black American Literature Forum*, now known as the *African American Review*. Soon he would authenticate and facilitate the publication, in 1983, of *Our Nig*, or, *Sketches from the Life of a Free Black (1859)*, by Harriet Wilson, then believed to be the first novel published by an African-American woman. And two decades later, in 2002, Gates authenticated and published *The Bondwoman's Narrative* by Hannah Crafts, dating from the early 1850s and now considered one of the first novels written by an African-American woman.

In 1981, however, Skip's career changed dramatically when he won a so-called genius grant. I doubt any humanist has put those five years to better use than Skip, for out of these years came writing that ultimately reshaped African-American literary study, especially *Black Literature and Literary Theory, The Slave's Narrative: Texts and Contexts*, with his great mentor Charles T. Davis, and the brilliant collection that first appeared as a special issue of *Critical Inquiry*, perhaps the single

most influential special issue I know of a literary critical journal, "Race," *Writing, and Difference* (1986), whose essays by Edward Said, Gayatri Spivack, Anthony Appiah, Mary Louise Pratt, Homi Bhabha, Jane Tompkins, Sander Gilman, Hazel Carby, among others explored the various ways the discussion of race might penetrate the whole of literary study. As breath-taking as such accomplishments over a career may be, Skip was just 35 when both *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the Racial Self* and the instrumental *Classic Slave Narratives* (New American Library) first appeared. A year later was published the *Signifying Monkey: Toward a Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*, winner of the American Book Award in 1989, which cemented his place, along with his friend Houston Baker, as one of the two leading theorists of African-American literary studies. Until that time, some of us recall, an older generation and its acolytes hoped that the new movement away from vernacularism and bibliography and toward theory would eventually go away, but of course it was Gates' ideas that triumphed. He concludes these years of unparalleled and decisive publication with the conclusion of his first great editing project, in 1988, the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers, a 30-volume collection of writings that did nothing less than reconstitute a field. Three years later, he added a ten-volume supplement to the Library, thereby creating a redoubtably enduring archive.

Throughout this fecund period of feverish production, Professor Gates never lost sight of the larger arguments he wanted to make about the place of African-American literature in the culture and the place of African Americans in the US. Yet at the same time, Skip ventured into one of his least-heralded but most important projects, when he revived and became the publisher of *Transition* magazine, an international review of African, Caribbean, and African American politics and culture. As the next phase of his writing seems to testify, he seems to move from literary studies to their general implications in his *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (1992), *Colored People: A Memoir* (1994) of his youth, *The Future of the Race* (with Cornel West (1996)), and *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man*. These studies draw on his experiences and deliver his reflections on African Americans' expression of their history, social ways, and culture. Yet the conjecture that Skip lost interest in literature would be wrong on two counts: throughout his career, Gates has supervised a plethora of new editions of important African-American texts, by Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Frederick Douglass, and James Weldon Johnson and edited numerous collections of criticism on key figures like Richard Wright, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, Alice Walker, Langston Hughes, and Hurston, and he continued to do so during these years as well.

The second way lies in the part he played producing the Norton Anthology of African-American Literature (1996). While many anthologies had preceded it—and some were really quite good—none enjoyed the unprecedented scale and scope of the Norton, which now stands alone, even 10 years later, as the most comprehensive volume on the subject, and the one with the very best headnotes, which many of you contributed, under the leadership of Nellie and Skip.

In the last ten years, Skip has sustained a pace that most of us find unimaginable and has also broadened his career, not only through the public service of the many, many Boards to which he has been named, but through the projects for PBS that he has written and narrated. These include the film, “From Great Zimbabwe to Kilimatinde,” in the series on Great Rail Journeys (1996), “The Two Nations of Black America” he wrote and hosted for Frontline (1998), “Wonders of the African World,” a six-part series (1998), his four-part series for BBC and PBS, “American beyond the Color Line (2004), and “African-American Lives,” the four-hour series which played earlier this year, the first documentary series to employ genealogy and science to provide an understanding of African American history. Perhaps his crowning achievement in these public works is the CD-Rom encyclopedia he created with Anthony Appiah, *Encarta Africana*, which has won no fewer than 14 awards from various educational and media groups.

Yet, try as I might to distinguish between Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Skip Gates, the public intellectual, old Skip just won't let people misunderstand his career so neatly. He remains Editor-in-Chief of the Oxford African American Studies Center, the first comprehensive scholarly online resource in the field of African American Studies and Africana Studies; the author of *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley: America's First Black Poet and Her Encounters with the Founding Fathers* (2003); and the coeditor of a new *Annotated Uncle Tom's Cabin* (2006). Forthcoming in February, 2007 is the documentary “Finding Oprah's Roots, Finding Your Own,” a one-hour documentary on the genealogical and genetic heritage of Oprah Winfrey, for which a companion volume will also be published. He is currently at work on a four-hour sequel to “African American Lives,” which is scheduled to air in February 2008, and is completing a book on race and writing in the eighteenth century, entitled “Black Letters and the Enlightenment,” which, I trust, will be the summa of his magisterial career.

For me, the wonder of Gates' career has not only been its variety but also its coherence and comprehensiveness, how so much of it was laid out so early

and how the rest of it was discovered in the course of his dedication to the principles guiding him over thirty years. I think also of Skip's bountiful gifts and how he has earned the opportunities to fulfill them, how at so many various points he has understood what the profession needed and found a way to provide them. I think especially how indispensable his work has been—not just his scholarship and criticism, but also his editing and publishing, occasional writing, his whole cultural office.

This year when the Hubbell Committee vetted our candidates we came together quickly and unanimously to award this Medal to Skip Gates. It is now my great pleasure to do so.

Professor Gates is unable to attend the ceremony, but he has prepared a few words, which Rudolph Byrd will deliver. So please welcome Professor Byrd. I am sure that your applause will be heard all the way back to Cambridge!

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon Hutner



Hubbell Acceptance Speech By Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

I came to the study of African American Literature for the first time in a formal manner through a scholar named Charles Twitchell Davis. Mister Davis, as all of his students called him, even unto his untimely death, was the first African American to be granted tenure in the English Department at Yale. Mister Davis was also the first black Master of Calhoun College—John C. Calhoun College—an irony he never tired of noting, with that inimitable gleam in his eye. Mister Davis was a man of style, as dapper in spirit and dress as he was dapper in mind. And did he love style! His principal Spring ritual turned on the Kentucky Derby, for which he would meticulously prepare Mint Juleps from his secret recipe, and then don his newly-shined white bucks to watch the race, dressed to the nines in

a three piece white suit, like some café au lait version of Tom Wolfe, puffing on his funkier cigar as the race progressed. I loved watching him watch the horses race, far more than I enjoyed watching the race itself. He used to say that this was the most sublime two minutes in the history of sports. But it was his embodiment of style that made it sublime for me.

In his scholarly work as in his life, Mister Davis was also a man who focused on style, on the language of the text and its signs and symbols. He was classically trained in American literature at Dartmouth (where he was denied a Rhodes Scholarship in 1939 because of his race), in American Studies at the University of Chicago in 1941, where he wrote a master's thesis on the Harlem Renaissance, under the direction of Allison Davis, the first black person to teach at an historically white major research university, and at NYU where he took his Ph.D. in 1951, writing a dissertation on Whitman. In the early fifties, he became the first black professor to teach at Princeton, where he would eventually be denied tenure, just as he was denied his Rhodes Scholarship, because he was black. It would take over a decade and a half for him to recover from this blow, until he returned to the Ivy League to assume the chairmanship of Yale's stellar Program in Afro-American Studies.

Methodologically, Mister Davis would have seemed to have been made for the New Criticism. With an almost innate attention to the details of style, he loved to devote minute attention to the language of the text, and he was fond of reminding his students that had a creative writer wished for us to explicate her or his work merely at the level of theme, she or he would have written an essay, and not a complex set of signifying structures that we call a poem, a play, or a novel. Mister Davis brought this careful concern with the texture of formal language-use to bear on African American literature. Indeed, he was one of the first truly close readers of the texts that make up the canon of the black tradition. Make no mistake about it: Charles was a snob when it came to taste: the tradition, as far as he was concerned, culminated in an apex of excellence and creativity with Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Ralph Ellison. While he valued Paul Laurence Dunbar's place in the canon, and delighted in reading Dunbar's dialect poetry aloud, he was not a particular fan of Hurston's use of dialect, curiously enough. But he loved Toni Morrison's work from the very beginning, and even hired her to teach at Yale in the mid-seventies in the Program in Afro-American Studies of which he served nobly as Chair between 1971 (my junior year at Yale) and 1981, when he died so very prematurely of cancer of the liver. He was first and last a modernist, but he embraced early black post-modernists as well:

while extraordinarily fond of Jean Toomer's "Cane," about which he wrote one of his most important essays, he also was a vocal proponent of both Amiri Baraka's work, as well as Ishmael Reed's stunningly brilliant first four parodic and satirical novels. He would bring both to Yale, hiring Baraka to teach for a year in the midst of his most strident Marxist period. He even allowed Baraka to issue press releases on his "Revolutionary Communist League" stationery, using 493 College Street as his address, the same address as that of the Program in Afro-American Studies!

Mister Davis loved to teach black literature as much as he loved to read it. He taught a graduate seminar on "The Afro-American Literary Tradition" each year for the English Department. And it was in this seminar, which he offered in the Spring semester of the 1975-1976 academic year, that I fell in love with Afro-American literature as well.

I had returned from graduate school in English Language and Literature from the University of Cambridge in the summer of 1975, to attend the Law School at Yale. I had fled Cambridge, deeply frustrated and exhausted from my ideological battles with the Faculty of English at Cambridge, which had just the year before denied the Nigerian playwright, Wole Soyinka, teaching privileges because "African literature," as they put it, "just wasn't 'literature.'" It was definitely anthropology, at the least, they argued, and perhaps sociology, at the best. But it was not literature. So, I had been introduced to the African worlds of mythology and literature by Wole Soyinka himself, as his sole student in the Social Anthropology Department at Cambridge, rather than through the English Department where I was enrolled. After one month at the Law School—truth be told, I knew after just one week—I realized that I was meant to become a scholar of literature, and not a lawyer after all. And so, I took a leave-of-absence. Last time I checked, I was still on leave!

But now I would need a job, to support myself and my fiancée. So off I went to Calhoun College, to ask Mister Davis for his advice. He had supervised a tutorial that I took junior year with Linda Darling, my girlfriend at the time, on the History of the Blues. Linda was a brilliant pianist and vocalist. Since she and I broke up during the middle of the semester, I was able to bring a certain experiential reality to the study of the Blues that semester that I would not have understood otherwise! The tutorial, in other words, was a disaster, with Linda and I dividing up our sessions with Mister Davis, so that we could avoid seeing each other's jive-time face! What hell that semester was: we had decided to take all of our courses together, because we couldn't stand not being together; soon enough, we couldn't stand to be in each other's presence! But Mis-

ter Davis was cool with the whole thing, and seemed to be oddly bemused by our determination to go on with the tutorial, and divide him and ourselves into two parallel and never-intersecting universes. He even allowed us to write and submit a final paper jointly, which we somehow managed to do without ever conferring once about its final form, and without ever seeing even one draft from the other's pen! Somehow, nonetheless, we managed to earn an A, which I believe Mister Davis granted us as an award for all of the amusement that our tortured antics provided him!

So that is how I found myself in his office, in late September, 1975, begging for some sort of job. He asked me if I could type. Turns out that I can type very well, thanks to two years of training, mandatory for all boys in my high school, in the sophomore and junior years. Also turned out that the secretary in Afro-Am had just quit, and the Program was having trouble finding a suitable replacement. So, on October 1, 1975, I became a Secretary B in the Program in Afro-American Studies at Yale, typing memos, manuscripts, and letters, a position I held and enjoyed, quite frankly, until July 1, 1976, when Mister Davis promoted me to a Lecturer in Afro-American Studies and English.

When the second semester started, Mister Davis called me into his office and invited me—no, instructed me—to audit his graduate seminar in Afro-American Lit. While I had read fairly widely in the tradition, I had done so as an avocation, for fun, and, of course, as an undergraduate at Yale in the mid to late sixties, for all that these ferociously adamant texts could unveil to me, sheltered as I was in the hills of eastern West Virginian, about the nature of the unfolding Black Experience. I had, in other words, never studied African American literature in a formal way. But all of that was about to change.

Walking into that seminar—which he held in the Master's Living Room of Calhoun College—was like walking into a Hall of Wonders. Unbeknownst to me, I was about to participate in one of the truly great learning experiences in my life, and, I believe, in the lives of the other participants, who included Kimberly Benston (now a professor at Haverford), Horace Porter (now at Iowa), Cynthia Smith (now at Smith), Joe Skerritt (now at UMass), Erroll McDonald (senior vice president at Random House, and a major editor of African American authors), and Rudolph Byrd (now at Emory and who is the kind man who is reading this speech!), among several other major figures at work in the profession today. I couldn't wait for this class to meet each week, couldn't wait to do the reading, and to hear the oral presentations of my stellar fellow seminarians. To this day, we are all, to a person, the proverbial children of Charlie Davis, and we read African

American literature in much the same way that Mister Davis did, with an added dash of theory, perhaps, thrown in to our explications for spice. I know that I most certainly do. Without Charles Davis's tutelage, I wouldn't even be in the profession.

I fell in love with African American literature in that seminar, and with Charles Davis's approach to the study of African American literature, and have never looked back. He would often remind us that we were at the beginning of the formal study of this great literary tradition in the broader academy (while Black Literature had been taught at Howard since the 1920's, it was only being introduced into English Department and American Studies curricula with the coming of Black Studies in the late sixties) and that we had the great fortune of being unburdened by a mountain of secondary sources through which we had to wade to establish our bona fides as scholars. Of course, he continued, that which was a blessing of sorts, was also a curse: each of our readings would be pioneering, by definition, because so very few close readings of black texts existed—that was the good news. The bad news was that we had so very little to build upon in the way of an established critical tradition. Teaching us the best of the critical tradition as embodied by Sterling Brown, Arthur Davis (his uncle), and Ralph Ellison, among others, nevertheless, he told us again and again, we would be, by and large, out there on our own. And then, too, as he was fond of noting, the mixed blessing of the scholar of black literature was that, often, we had to resurrect the texts of the tradition before we could explicate them, demanding that we be literary historians as well as literary critics, that we be careful and meticulous historical researchers as well as clever theorists and close readers, that we establish texts just as our white colleagues had been forced to do fifty years before, and read them closely, first and last as acts of language, stressing their status as literature and not as polemic.

We had to do more than our peers in white American literature, he would admonish us, and we had to do it better, more carefully, than they, because many of our older colleagues in the field were skeptical of the value and worth of this body of literature, thinking—as had my professors back at the University of Cambridge—that black literature was anthropology, at the least, and sociology, at best, but not really "literature." We had to "represent" the tradition, in English Departments and in American Studies programs, and we had to show both racists and well-meaning skeptics that "our" literature was just as accomplished and complex as white male American literature. That was our burden; but that also was our enormous privilege, both an historic responsibility and an opportunity to write "definitive" analyses (Mister Davis went to

his grave believing that a single, well-wrought analysis could be definitive) of this great yet still largely unknown tradition of literature that he loved, and which we would come to love as well. Ours was the “cross-over” generation, and if we did our jobs well, our legacy would be the canonization of African American literature, both as part of the larger American tradition, and as a tradition of its own, one with its own histories, rules, and even theories through which its texts could be explicated. One day, he once mused, we might even live to see the publication of a Norton Anthology of African American Literature, a seemingly impossible dream in 1976, which we all paused in that seminar setting to contemplate.

It should be clear by now that I loved Charles T. Davis, and that I am proud to have been his student. And without Charles’s example and tutelage, I would never have embarked upon a career as a scholar of African American literature. It should also be clear that the path that I have taken was charted by Mister Davis both in that seminar, and in my capacity as his junior colleague in Afro-Am between 1976 and his death in 1981.

I never dreamed that my colleagues in American Literature in the MLA would select me to receive this great award, and I am deeply touched and honored—and humbled—by this gesture. I have to confess that much that I have done or tried to do, I have done to honor the memory of my mentor, Mister Davis, who died much too soon at the age of 61 to see so many of his hopes about the institutional presence of the black tradition realized. I keep his picture just above my desk on the wall of my office at Harvard, to remind me why I am here, and how I got here from there. So you will understand if I accept this honor in Mister Davis’s name.

Of all the projects in which I have participated since my career in the profession began in 1975, I have to confess that it is the “recovery” projects that have brought me the most joy and professional satisfaction. In discussions with Mister Davis, and with the great black historian, John W. Blassingame (“Blass,” as we called him, was the first African American scholar to write a full-length study of slavery from the point of view of the slaves themselves, in his seminal book entitled “The Slave Community,” published in 1972), it became clear to me that our generation of scholars of the black tradition had to find a way to map the field with foundational reference works, sophisticated reference works such as biographical dictionaries, canon-establishing anthologies, encyclopedias of history and culture, scholarly editions of texts, collected works of authors whose works had never been collected, and which were languishing in the rare black

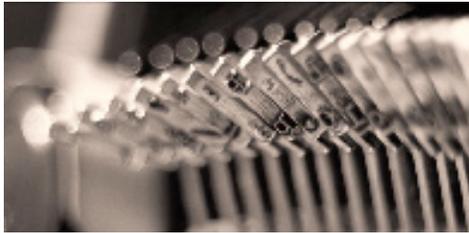
newspaper or magazine in middle nineteenth or early twentieth century, collected papers projects for major canonical figures such as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes and others, bibliographies, concordances, recovered “lost” texts—in short, all of the foundational reference works that, taken together, make a field of study, well, a genuine academic field.

It is upon reference works such as these that any discipline of study is constructed, and Afro-Am (as we called in back at Yale) would be no exception. Indeed, we were determined that we would be part of the generation that eliminated forever the curse of scholars of African American Studies: that each successive generation was forced to reinvent the proverbial wheel, repeating research unknowingly undertaken by previous scholars, of which we remained painfully unaware. It was nothing less than a textual legacy of Memory that we hoped to leave to our colleagues and students, and to successive generations of our intellectual heirs. And that is why I embarked upon projects such as the Black Periodical Literature Project, the Africana Encyclopedia, the Norton Anthology of African American Literature, with my dear friend and colleague, Nellie McKay, and nine of our senior colleagues in the profession. This is why I worked so diligently to authenticate the identity of Harriet Wilson, the author of the first novel published by a black woman in the African American literary tradition, and that of Hannah Crafts, the author of the novel, “The Bondswoman’s Narrative.” Moreover, this is why I was delighted to edit with so many colleagues in our field the 40 volume series called the Schomburg Library of Black Women’s Writings, forever returning to print and to the classroom those myriad texts in all genres by black women in the nineteenth century, so many of which had been long lost or long out of print. It is this same impulse that has led me to edit, with my colleague Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, the 6,000 entries that will make up the African American National Biography, to be published on-line and in print by Oxford University Press.

Because of the dedication and the vision of Charles T. Davis and John W. Blassingame, who imprinted their dreams of the future direction of African American Studies upon their students, and most certainly upon me, my own research agenda was set out for me, fully three decades ago. I had only to follow the trail that they charted; that was my task, and that is what I have tried to do. Davis and Blassingame were the two scholars who brought me to the party. And through the research projects that I have pursued, I have tried to do them justice, as we say, tried to honor their memories, and tried to make them proud, even

though they were true giants of our field, and I merely one of their many disciples. And it is in memory of these two great Americanists, Charles T. Davis and John W. Blassingame, and on behalf of all of us who love black literature and culture, that I accept this signal honor that you have conferred upon me today. In selecting me, you have honored them, my great teachers, my inspiration for the work that I do. This is certainly the greatest honor that I have received since I became a member of the profession. And I want to thank you so very, very much.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.



Citation for the Foerster Prize
Sara Blair, Chair of the Committee for 2006

It's an honor to be here awarding this honor; many thanks to my fellow committee members, Elizabeth Barnes (English, William and Mary) and James Lee (Asian American Studies, UC Santa Barbara), with whom it was truly a pleasure to work.

Collectively, we had the happy duty of reading the entire year's volumes of *American Literature* to determine the outstanding essay published there. It was an unusually absorbing task; we found a wide array of projects, many essays worthy of remarking, all immensely profitable to read. Nonetheless we found ourselves in ready consensus, on two counts.

First, the committee felt it important to recognize, with the rare award of Honorable Mention, a scholar whom many of us heard earlier this afternoon—Caleb Smith—for his luminous essay, "Emerson and Incarceration." Based on rich literary and historical readings, Smith argues for a need to "reckon with the lives of people whose confinement has deeply informed the discourse of freedom and redemption in the modern United States." Smith's meditations on Emerson and intellectual labor, made in light of his case for Emerson's engagement with the material reality of the modern prison, are a powerful challenge for our times; they show us how deeply imbedded is an "ambivalent dance" between liberation and incarceration in our collective national psyche. This critical nexus sheds new light on the Emerson we thought we knew—and on our understanding of the notions of freedom with which our critical enterprise can imaginatively engage. Congratulations to Caleb Smith for this work.

Beyond this recognition, the committee reached unanimous agreement on the winning essay. Titled "From Eye to We: Richard Wright's 12 Million Black Voices, Documentary and Pedagogy," this work distinguished itself for its bracing originality, its nuanced arguments for a long-neglected text, and its moving fluency: in short, for its rich complexity of critical imagination and expression. Focusing on Wright's long-neglected photo-text, the essay argues for Wright's interest in pedagogy—that is, in the narrative and political construction of a collective voice resistant to America's dominant nationalist-populist structure of feeling (a project that makes *Black Voices*, potentially, a valuable resource well beyond the moment of its making). Through articulate, finely grained readings, the essay not only opens the power of Wright's aesthetics to view; it substantially alters our notions of what "documentary" aesthetics might encompass, of the ligatures between documentary production and what we've come to know as modernism, and it argues for a modernist practice "whose teaching has at its horizon the construction of more... complex collectivities," predicated on recognition of constitutive histories of racial, class, and regional division. This essay, in short, reminds us how powerful literary scholarship can be, both as a form of attention to histories of the nation's making and unmaking, and as a committed critical practice. Its author is Jeff Allred. Congratulations to him for the well-deserved Foerster Prize of 2006.

Professor Allred's Acceptance Speech

It is a great honor just to be published in *American Literature*, much less to be singled out among so many fine scholars and writers. Since as we all know, scholars chronically break the advice of Philadelphia's own Ben Franklin to avoid borrowing or lending, I would like to thank a number of my intellectual creditors: editors Houston Baker, Jr. and Priscilla Wald; my two anonymous readers; managing editor Frances Kerr and the staff of *American Literature*, especially for their patient help with image permissions; the selection committee for the Foerster Prize; participants in the *American Literature Seminar* at the University of Pennsylvania, especially Nancy Bentley, and members of my seminar at the Dartmouth American Studies Institute, especially Elizabeth Dillon; Eric Cheyfitz, Rita Barnard, Matt Gold, and Alan Wald.

I would like to close with a little story that will serve as a reminder, I hope, of why our work matters. As it turns out, two days before getting notice of this award, I found myself in the main branch of the public library of Jackson, MS, which is my hometown and might be considered Richard Wright's as well. Noting the presence of a locked "Mississippi Writers' Room"

on the first floor, I asked for the key and started to poke around. In the center of the room were the obligatory shrines to William Faulkner and to Eudora Welty, after whom the library is named; the lesser lights are arrayed around them. In the back right corner sits a glass case stuffed with the odds and ends of three writers: Willie Morris, the late author of *My Dog Skip*, Craig Claiborne, the esteemed cookbook writer, and Richard Wright. It would take a long time to unpack all of the ironies bound up in this moment, beginning with Wright's need to resort to forging notes as a young man to get his hands on books in Southern libraries. Suffice it to say for now that this moment reminded me of the importance of our critical work as teachers and writers as we tug at textual loose threads and hold up dark mirrors to our students and readers. Thank you very much.

Jeff Allred

American Literature Annual Report 2006

The year 2006 brought a number of transitions for American Literature. In September, Editor Houston A. Baker Jr. joined the English Department at Vanderbilt University. Priscilla Wald assumed the editorship of the journal.

Kelly Jarrett, who served as assistant managing editor for five years, left in August to become Program Director of the new Islamic Studies Center at Duke University. Emily Dings is our new assistant managing editor; she joined the staff in November.

In March, AL launched Editorial Manager, an on-line submission system managed by Aries Systems. All new submissions are now completely processed on EM, including reader reports and decision letters. The new submission guidelines appear in the inside back cover of each issue of AL and on the Duke University Press Web site (www.dukeupress.edu). We are still accepting paper revised resubmissions for manuscripts submitted before March 2006.

Awards for American Literature Essays

Don. D. Walker Prize for the best essay published on Western American literature in 2005:

Janet Dean, "Nameless Outrages: Narrative Authority, Rape Rhetoric, and the Dakota Conflict of 1862" (March 2005)

Foerster Prize

Jeff Allred, "From Eye to We: Richard Wright's 12 Million Black Voices, Documentary, and Pedagogy" (September 2006)

Foerster Prize, Honorable Mention

Caleb Smith, "Emerson and Incarceration," (June 2006)

American Literature Staff

Our graduate-student employee is Brit Russert. This is her second year at the journal. Our work-study students this academic year are Daniel Riley and Chelsea Mize. This is Daniel's second year. Frances Kerr completed her sixth year as managing editor.

Members Leaving the Board in December 2006

Michael Elliott, Emory University
Carla Kaplan, Northeastern University
Robert Levine, University of Maryland
Leeland Person, University of Cincinnati
Maurice Wallace, Duke University

New Board Members, beginning in January 2006

James Dawes, Macalester College
Laura Doyle, University of Massachusetts,
Amherst
Gabrielle Foreman, Occidental College

Steven Mailloux, University of California, Irvine
Brooke Thomas, University of California, Irvine

Contents of American Literature, Volume 78

22	Essays
3	Book Review Essays
118	Reviews

Total number of pages: 924

One special issue: "Global Contexts, Local Literatures: The New Southern Studies," edited by Kathryn McKee and Annette Trefzer (December 2006)

New submissions

(Does not include revised resubmissions)

Editorial Manager (starting March 9):	209
Paper submissions (before March 9):	33
Total	242

Decisions made on essays during 2006: 297

(Note: This number is different from the number of submissions because it includes essays submitted before 1 January 2006 and revised resubmissions submitted during 2006.)

Accept	43
Revise Toward Acceptance	12
Reject	222
Revise for Reconsideration	<u>20</u>
Total	297

The acceptance rate for 2006 was 14% (Calculated on the number of essays processed, not the number of new submissions.)

Report on American Literary Scholarship

American Literary Scholarship is an annual publication providing bibliographic essays arranged by author and by time period, from pre-1800 to the present. The journal serves as a "systematic evaluative guide to current published studies of American literature" (ALA Booklist). American Literary Scholarship is indexed/abstracted in the following publications: Humanities International Complete, Humanities International Index, International Bibliography of Periodical Literature (IBZ), and the MLA Bibliography. Membership in the American Literature Section includes as one of its benefits a subscription to American Literary Scholarship, as well as to American Literature.

Editors of the journal are David J. Nordloh of Indiana University and Gary Scharnhorst of the University of New Mexico. The address for the editorial office is Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

Authors of essays for the 2006 volume, which surveyed scholarship for the year 2004, were as follows: David M. Robinson ("Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Transcendentalism"), Thomas R. Mitchell ("Hawthorne"), Dennis Berthold ("Melville"), M. Jimmie Killingsworth ("Whitman and Dickinson"), Alan Gribben ("Mark Twain"), Sarah B. Daugherty ("Henry James"), Carol J. Singley and Ann Moseley ("Wharton and Cather"), Alec Marsh and Jayme Stayer ("Pound and Eliot"), Joseph R. Urgo ("Faulkner"), Hilary K. Justice and Robert W. Trogdon ("Fitzgerald and Hemingway"), William J. Scheick ("Literature to 1800"), Ed Piacentino ("Early-19th-Century Literature"), Nicolas S. Witschi ("Late-19th-Century Literature"), Donna M. Campbell ("Fiction: 1900 to the 1930s"), Catherine Calloway ("Fiction: The 1930s to the 1960s"), Jerome Klinkowitz ("Fiction: The 1960s to the Present"), Camille Norton ("Poetry: 1900 to the 1940s"), Frank Kearful ("Poetry: The 1940s to the Present"), James J. Martine ("Drama"), Theodore O. Mason, Jr. ("Themes, Topics, Criticism"), Maria Anita Stefanelli ("Scholarship in Languages Other Than English: Italian Contributions"), Keiko Beppu ("Scholarship in Languages Other Than English: Japanese Contributions, 2003-2004"), Bo G. Ekelunk, Lene Johannessen, and Henrik Lassen ("Scholarship in Languages Other Than English: Scandinavian Contributions"), Elzbieta H. Oleksy and Zoltán Abádi-Nagy ("Scholarship in Languages Other Than English: Central European Contributions"), and David J. Nordloh ("General Reference Works").

American Literature Sessions MLA 2006

Philadelphia, PA; December 27-30

American Literature Section

109. Detention and United States Sovereignty: Paradigms, Practices

8:30–9:45 a.m., 203-B, Convention Center

Program arranged by the American Literature
Section

Presiding: Sarah R. Robbins, Kennesaw State
Univ.

1. “The Tortured Body and the Photograph: The United States War on Terror, Abu Ghraib, and Racial Lynching,” Julie Gerck Hernandez, Univ. of Cincinnati
2. “Expenditure, Excess, and Expendable Bodies: Detention and Questions of Sovereignty,” Jana Evans Braziel, Univ. of Cincinnati
3. “Due Process, Lethal Confinement, and New World Security,” Colin Dayan, Vanderbilt Univ.

Respondent: Eduardo Lujan Cadava, Princeton
Univ.

257. Detention and/as United States Literature

3:30–4:45 p.m., Grand Ballroom Salon J,
Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the American Literature
Section

Presiding: Phillip J. Barrish, Univ. of Texas,
Austin

1. “The Inside Stories of the Global American Prison,” H. Bruce Franklin, Rutgers Univ., Newark
2. “‘The Land of the Free’: Imprisonment,

United States Literature, and National Identity,”
Peter Caster, Univ. of South Carolina–Upstate

3. “Detention without Subjects,” Caleb Smith,
Yale Univ.

Respondent: Amy Kaplan, Univ. of Pennsylvania

297. Cash Bar and Awards Ceremony, American Literature Section

5:15–6:30 p.m., Grand Ballroom Salon J,
Philadelphia Marriott

American Literature Divisions

American Literature to 1800

264. New Approaches to Religion

3:30–4:45 p.m., Independence Ballroom Salon
III, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on American
Literature to 1800

Presiding: Kristina Bross, Purdue Univ., West
Lafayette; Lisa M. Gordis, Barnard Coll.

1. “The Martyr as Family Man: The Work of John Foxe in 1660s Massachusetts,” Anne G. Myles, Univ. of Northern Iowa
2. “‘A Man All in Black, with a Thing in His Hand’: Protestant Book Culture and the Contact Zone,” Matthew P. Brown, Univ. of Iowa

3. “Transatlantic Paganism,” Mary Helen McMurrin, Univ. of Western Ontario

315. Early African America

7:15–8:30 p.m., Independence Ballroom Salon
III, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on American
Literature to 1800

Presiding: Joanna M. Brooks, San Diego State
Univ.

1. “Pleasure Deep Down: Writing Love and God in the Poems of Phillis Wheatley,” Tara Bynum,

Johns Hopkins Univ.

2. "African Americans on, at, or near the Stage," Jeffrey Hamilton Richards, Old Dominion Univ.

3. "Maria Stewart and the Radical Dimensions of Early African-Atlantic Thought," Stefan Wheelock, Univ. of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh

642. New Approaches to Early American Interiority

8:30–9:45 a.m., 404, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on American Literature to 1800

Presiding: Christopher D. Castiglia, Loyola Univ., Chicago

1. "Rush to Punishment: Pits, Pendulums, and the Early Penitentiary," Jason Haslam, Dalhousie Univ.

2. "Apprehending Anxiety in Charles Brockden Brown's *Ormond*," Justine S. Murison, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana

3. "Friendship, Cannibalism, and Comparative Spaces of Early American Interiority," Ivy Schweitzer, Dartmouth Coll.

Nineteenth-Century American Literature

22. Thinking Animals

5:15–6:30 p.m., 303, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Nineteenth-Century American Literature

Presiding: Sharon M. Harris, Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs

1. "Thoreau's Inner Animal: Male Purity and Brute Neighbors," Neill Matheson, Univ. of Texas, Arlington

2. "Grace Greenwood's Historical *Pets*," Christopher Looby, Univ. of California, Los Angeles

3. "Wild and Domestic in Jack London," Christine Mahady, Univ. of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh

4. "Archaeology of a Humane Society," Michael S. Lundblad, Univ. of Virginia

147. Thinking through Genres

10:15–11:30 a.m., 413, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Nineteenth-Century American Literature

Presiding: Eliza Richards, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

1. "The Popular Ballad in Nineteenth-Century America," Michael Cohen, New York Univ.

2. "'If Not in the Word, in the Sound': Epistemologies of Listening and the Genre of the Slave Narrative," Jennifer Stoeber, Univ. of Southern California

3. "Anticipating Colonialism: American Letters on Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1831–35," Ivonne Garcia, Ohio State Univ., Columbus

4. "Thinking through Ethnography," Michael A. Elliott, Emory Univ.

682. What Are Children For?

10:15–11:30 a.m., Grand Ballroom Salon I, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Nineteenth-Century American Literature

Presiding: Patricia Crain, New York Univ.

1. "Practicing for Print: The Hale Children's Manuscript Libraries," Karen Sánchez-Eppler, Amherst Coll.

2. "Cunning Lolly; or, Mrs. Stoddard's Crafty Child," Christopher Looby, Univ. of California, Los Angeles

3. "Fixing Otherness: Children in Arnold Genthe's Photographs of Chinatown," Xiaojing

Zhou, Univ. of the Pacific

Respondent: Caroline Field Levander, Rice Univ.

Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century American Literature

90. American Bestiaries

8:45–10:00 p.m., Grand Ballroom Salon J, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century American Literature

Presiding: Bill Brown, Univ. of Chicago

1. “*Understudies: Mary Wilkins Freeman’s Performing Animals*,” Susan Mary Griffin, Univ. of Louisville
2. “*Archaeology of a Humane Society*,” Michael S. Lundblad, Univ. of Virginia
3. “*Topsy the Elephant, Thomas Edison, and a Brief History of Circus Justice*,” Laurie Shannon, Duke Univ.
4. “*Animal Autobiographies*,” Colleen Glenney Boggs, Dartmouth Coll.

115. American Sex

8:30–9:45 a.m., 202-A, Convention Center

Program arranged by the Division on Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century American Literature

Presiding: Nancy Bentley, Univ. of Pennsylvania

1. “*Is Sex Everything?*” Dale Marie Bauer, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana
2. “*‘It’s Not the Tragedies That Kill Us, It’s the Messes’: The Couple, the Couplet, and Disappointment in Dorothy Parker*,” Lauren Berlant, Univ. of Chicago
3. “*Sex, Panic, Nation*,” Bruce Burgett, Univ. of Washington, Bothell

Respondent: Eric L. Haralson, Stony Brook Univ., State Univ. of New York

442. Sacred Cultures

12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., 413, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century American Literature

Presiding: Gordon N. Hutner, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana

1. “*Secular Aesthetics*,” Jordan Stein, Johns Hopkins Univ.
2. “*DuBois’s Devotions*,” Yolanda Pierce, Univ. of Kentucky
3. “*Islam and Transnational Imaginaries at the Turn of the Century*,” Jacob Rama Berman, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge

Twentieth-Century American Literature

21. Beyond the Oedipal: Siblings in American Literature

5:15–6:30 p.m., 304, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century American Literature

Presiding: John Wharton Lowe, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge

1. “*The ‘Twin-Self’: Sister Texts in H.D.’s HERmione*,” Hilary Emmett, Cornell Univ.
2. “*Sedaris*,” Kevin Richard Kopelson, Univ. of Iowa
3. “*Whose Life Is It, Anyway? Disability and the Ethics of Sibling Memoir*,” Susannah Beth Mintz, Skidmore Coll.

239. Visualization in New Geographies

1:45–3:00 p.m., Independence Ballroom Salon III, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century American Literature

Presiding: Thadious M. Davis, Univ. of Pennsylvania

1. "More Than Whorled Peas: The Differential Worlds of Kathy Acker's Fiction," Ellen Lee McCallum, Michigan State Univ.
2. "Airport Screening: A New Type of Space," Christopher Schaberg, Univ. of California, Davis
3. "The Suburban Postnuclear Promised Land of Philip Wylie's *Tomorrow!*," Jacqueline M. Foertsch, Univ. of North Texas

653. Experimental Poetry and the Visual Arts

8:30–9:45 a.m., Grand Ballroom Salon K, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Twentieth-Century American Literature

Presiding: Marianne DeKoven, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick

1. "At Sixes and Sevens: Abstraction and Reference in Robert Creeley's 'Numbers,'" Timothy Pan Yu, Univ. of Toronto
2. "Hinged, Contingent, Joined: Susan Howe's *Hinge Picture*," Elisabeth W. Joyce, Edinboro Univ. of Pennsylvania
3. "Digital Poetry's Complex Surfaces: Navigations, Animations, Combinations," Maria Engberg, Blekinge Inst. of Tech.
4. "Image Cacophony: The Use of Imagery in Leslie Scalapino's *Dahlia's Iris: Secret Autobiography and Fiction*," Brenda Iijima, Brooklyn, NY

Black American Literature and Culture

242. Nellie McKay and the Art of Mentoring

1:45–3:00 p.m., Grand Ballroom Salon L, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Black American Literature and Culture

Presiding: Rhea Estelle Lathan, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison

Speakers: Shanna Greene Benjamin, Johnson C. Smith Univ.; David D. LaCroix, Univ. of Kentucky; Malin Pereira, Univ. of North Carolina, Charlotte; Faith Lois Smith, Brandeis Univ.

372. African-American Review at Forty: A Retrospective

8:30–9:45 a.m., Liberty Ballroom Salon C, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Black American Literature and Culture

Presiding: Joycelyn K. Moody, Saint Louis Univ.

Speakers: William Leake Andrews, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Houston A. Baker, Jr., Vanderbilt Univ.; Thadious M. Davis, Univ. of Pennsylvania; Trudier Harris, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Jerry W. Ward, Jr., Dillard Univ.; Joe Weixlmann, Saint Louis Univ.

445. African American Poetry and Performance: Collectives, Critics, Collaboration

12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., Grand Ballroom Salon J, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Black American Literature and Culture

Presiding: Meta DuEwa Jones, Univ. of Texas, Austin

1. "Marlon Riggs: Performing Black and Queer in the Twentieth Century," David Gerstner, Coll. of Staten Island, City Univ. of New York
2. "The Critical Eye and the Creative Process," A. Van Jordan, Univ. of Texas, Austin
3. "Performance, Collaboration, and Genre: The

Work of Form and Substance,” Jacqueline Jones LaMon, Adelphi Univ.

4. “It Takes a Village,” Evie Shockley, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick

American Indian Literatures

293. Poetry Reading by Roberta Jean Hill

5:15–6:30 p.m., 411–412, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on American Indian Literatures

Presiding: Robert A. Warrior, Univ. of Oklahoma

Speaker: Roberta Jean Hill, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison

430. Poetry and History in the Indigenous Americas

12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., Liberty Ballroom Salon A, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on American Indian Literatures

Presiding: Deborah A. Miranda, Washington and Lee Univ.

1. “Reclaiming the Language: Contemporary Anishinaabe Poetry,” Margaret A. Noori, Eastern Michigan Univ.

2. “The Reclaiming of History in Contemporary Poetry by Indigenous Women of North America,” Christina A. Roberts, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson

3. “The Persistence of Chumash Memory in the Poetry of Lorna Dee Cervantes and Deborah A. Miranda,” Sonia V. González, Purdue Univ., West Lafayette

Respondent: Lorna Cervantes, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder

680. Global Implications of the Statement on Native Languages: A Roundtable

10:15–11:30 a.m., 410, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on American Indian Literatures

Presiding: Frederick H. White, Slippery Rock Univ.

Speakers: Roberta Jean Hill, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison; John Hunt Peacock, Maryland Inst. Coll. of Art; Malea D. Powell, Michigan State Univ.

Asian American Literature

102. Visual Culture, New Media, Asian American Studies

8:30–9:45 a.m., 306, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Asian American Literature

Presiding: Greta AiYu Niu, Univ. of Rochester

1. “Visual Multiculturalism: Asian American Photography and the Struggle for Visibility,” T. N. Phu, Univ. of Western Ontario

2. “A Potent Poetics: Negotiating the Techno Body in Laiwan’s *Remotely in Touch* (1998),” Tara Lee, Simon Fraser Univ.

Respondent: Greta AiYu Niu

503. Ethics and Asian American Studies

3:30–4:45 p.m., 302, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Asian American Literature

Presiding: Tina Yih-Ting Chen, Vanderbilt Univ.

1. “Two Turns: Ethics, Aesthetics, Asian American Literature,” Christopher Lee, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana

2. “The Ethical Turn in Maxine Hong Kingston’s *Fifth Book of Peace*,” Jeannie Yu-Mei Chiu, Pace Univ., NY

3. “An Ethics of Asian American Queer Desire: Sadomasochistic Sex Acts in Lawrence Chua’s ‘King Rubber,’” Stephen Sohn, Univ. of

California, Santa Barbara

Respondent: Sue J. Kim, Univ. of Alabama, Birmingham

655. Politics of Feeling: Affect and Asian American Literature

10:15–11:30 a.m., 406, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the Division on Asian American Literature

Presiding: Leslie A. Bow, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison

1. “The Politics of Anger in Asian American Culture; or, Why Nice People Suck,” James Young Kim, Fordham Univ., Bronx
2. “Shame and the Refugee Subject in the Work of lê thi diem thúy and Aimee Phan,” Susan Muchshima Moynihan, Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of New York
3. “Psychic Readings: Paranoia and Asian American Literature and Culture,” Swan Kim, Univ. of Virginia
4. “It Feels like Work: Emotional Labor, Discipline, and Asian American Women,” K. Hyoejin Yoon, West Chester Univ.

Respondent: Jeffrey J. Santa Ana, Dartmouth Coll.

Chicana and Chicano Literature

71. Spirituality in Chicana/o Literature

8:45–10:00 p.m., Regency Ballroom C2, Loews

Program arranged by the Division on Chicana and Chicano Literature

Presiding: Catherine S. Ramírez, Univ. of California, Santa Cruz

1. “The Ghosts of Experience: Materiality and Spirituality in the Novels of Alejandro Morales, Yxta Maya Murray, and Graciela Limón,” Dean Joseph Franco, Wake Forest Univ.

2. “Comic Faith,” Carl Gutierrez-Jones, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara

3. “Renewing the Body Politic: Demetria Martinez’s Activist Theology,” Channette M. Romero, Union Coll., NY

4. “Triptych Cultural Critique: Visual, Textual, and Cultural Meaning in Fray Angélico Chávez’s Work,” Melina Vizcaíno, Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque

204. Chicana/o Literary and Cultural Studies in the Americas

12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., 201-B, Convention Center

Program arranged by the Division on Chicana and Chicano Literature

Presiding: Maria Cotera, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor

1. “Sor Juana as a Chicana/o Icon,” L. R. Velarde, Univ. of North Texas
2. “Chicana/o Border Writing and Cultural Studies of the Americas,” Claudia Sadowski-Smith, Arizona State Univ., Tempe
3. “Communal Identity and Global Nationalism in Ana Castillo’s *Sapogonia*,” Marissa K. Lopez, Univ. of California, Berkeley

483. Visual Culture and Chicana/o Literature

1:45–3:00 p.m., Regency Ballroom C1, Loews

Program arranged by the Division on Chicana and Chicano Literature

Presiding: Rafael M. Pérez-Torres, Univ. of California, Los Angeles

1. “Visualizing the Noir of Night in Lucha Corpi’s Detective Novels,” María DeGuzmán, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
2. “A New Millennial Xicana Superhero: Comic Book Types That Undo Stereotypes,” Frederick Luis Aldama, Ohio State Univ., Columbus

3. "Fantasies of Loving Pedro Infante," Richard T. Rodríguez, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana

4. "Shared Spaces; or, Toward a Process of Critical Interrogation: *La Llorona* in Two Short Films," Domino Renee Perez, Univ. of Texas, Austin



Lists from the Jay B. Hubbell Center for
American Literary Historiography
Special Collections Library
Duke University
Durham, NC 127708-0185
Telephone: 919-660-5820

American Literature Group/Section Chairs

1921: Killis Campbell
1922: Arthur H. Quinn
1923: Percy H. Boynton
1924: Fred L. Pattee
1925-27: Jay B. Hubbell
1928-29: Kenneth B. Murdock
1930-31: Robert E. Spiller
1932: Ralph L. Rusk
1933-34: Stanley T. Williams
1935-36: Howard Mumford Jones
1937-38: Sculley Bradley
1939: Jay B. Hubbell
1940-41: Napier Wilt
1942: Milton Ellis
1943: Tremaine McDowell
1944: Louise Pound
1945: Gregory Paine
1946: Willard Thorp
1947: Perry Miller
1948: Harry H. Clark
1949: Ernest E. Leisy
1950: Harry R. Warfel
1951: Randall Stewart
1952: Floyd Stovall
1953: Leon Howard
1954: William Charvat
1955: Gay Wilson Allen
1956: Theodore Hornberger
1957: Charles Anderson
1958: Walter Blair
1959: Clarence Gohdes
1960: Norman Holmes Pearson
1961: Herbert R. Brown
1962: Hyatt H. Waggoner
1963: Henry Nash Smith
1964: Lewis Leary
1965: Lyon N. Richardson

1966: Henry A. Pochmann
1967: Arlin Turner
1968: Roy Harvey Pearce
1969: John Gerber
1970: Hugh Holman
1971: Harrison Hayford
1972: Michael Millgate
1973: Norman Grabo
1974: Louis D. Rubin, Jr.
1975: Richard B. Davis
1976: Russel B. Nye
1977: Nathalia Wright
1978: William M. Gibson
1979: Edwin Cady
1980: Walter B. Rideout
1981: Joseph Blotner
1982: James M. Cox
1983: Lewis Simpson
1984: Nina Baym
1985: Martha Banta
1986: Roger Asselineau
1987: Leo Marx
1988: John Seelye
1989: J. A. Leo Lemay
1990: James Justus
1991: Emory Elliott
1992: Blanche Gelfant
1993: Elaine Hedges
1994: Eric Sundquist
1995: William Andrews
1996: Linda Wagner-Martin
1997: Susan K. Harris
1998: Cecelia Tichi
1999: Paul Lauter
2000: Robert Levine
2001: Thadious Davis
2002: Gary Scharnhorst
2003: Carla Kaplan
2004: Mary Loeffelholz
2005: Mary Loeffelholz
2006: Philip J. Barrish
2007: Sandra Zagarell

American Literature Section Secretary/Treasurers/
Executive Coordinators

1921-22: Francis A. Litz
1923: Robert Spiller
1924-26: Ernest Leisy
1928-36: Sculley Bradley
1937-41: Tremaine McDowell
1942-45: Alexander Cowie
1946-49: Allan Halline
1950-53: Arlin Turner
1954-57: Robert P. Falk
1957-61: Alexander Kern
1962-64: James Woodress
1966-69: Paul J. Carter, Jr.
1970-73: Robert Edson Lee
1974-77: William Mulder
1978-81: Charles Milon
1982-85: Donald Yannella
1986: Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV
1987-90: Jerome Loving
1991-94: Paul Sorrentino
1995-98: Susan Belasco
1999-06: Sheryl L. Meyering and Brian Abel Ragen
2006- : Sarah Robbins

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
1996: Blyden Jackson
1997: James M. Cox
1998: Louis J. Budd

1999: Paula Gunn Allen
2000: Nina Baym
2001: Paul Lauter
2002: Annette Kolodny
2003: Houston A. Baker
2004: Sacvan Bercovitch
2005: Martha Banta
2006: Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

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 and 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
1996: Chadwick Allen
1997: Lisa A. Long
1998: Amy Kaplan
1999: Mary Pat Brady
2000: Daylanne English
2001: Michael Warner with Natasha Hurley, Luis Igle-
sias, Sonia Di Loreto, Jeffrey Scraba, & Sandra Young
2002: Gillian Silverman
2003: Ed White
2004: Cherene Sherrard-Johnson
2005: Geoffrey Sanborn
2006: Jeff Allred

2005 Articles of Organization of the American Literature Section of the MLA

This document was originally adopted on December 31, 1947 and has been revised and amended several times over the years. This version, which incorporates amendments approved in the fall of 2005, becomes the current “Articles of Organization” for distribution to members of the Section and of the American Literature Divisions.

Membership

Any member of the Modern Language Association who pays the American Literature Section yearly dues to the Journals Department of Duke University Press will be a voting member in good standing in the Section.

Officers and Offices

The officers of the Section will be a Chair, a Chair-elect, and the Executive Coordinator.

Offices of the organization will consist of an Advisory Council, an Executive Committee of three members, the Chairs of Standing Committees, the Secretaries of the five American Literature Divisions, and the Editor and the fifteen other members of the Board of Editors of *American Literature*.

Tenure of Office

The Chair of the Section will hold office for one year and will not be eligible for successive re-election. The Executive Coordinator will serve a four-year term on initial appointment and may be appointed to a second term.

Duties of Officers

Chair. In consultation with the Advisory Council, the Chair will plan and preside over the program and the open meeting of the Section. He or she will appoint one member of the Hubbell Award Committee, three members of the

Foerster Award Committee, and the members of other committees recommended by the Advisory Council. He or she will observe the regulations established by the Modern Language Association for guidance of its organization.

Chair-elect. The Chair-elect will attend the Council meeting immediately following his or her election to office as an ex-officio member. He or she may assume other duties as sitting Council and Chair determine.

Executive Coordinator. The Executive Coordinator will maintain the files of the Section, handle daily correspondence, monitor the collection of dues by Duke University Press, pay the bills of the Section, organize the annual Section functions at MLA, order the Hubbell Medallion, conduct the annual election, work with the chair to plan and conduct the annual business meeting, work with the Chair and other members of the Advisory Council to run the Section, and compile, and publish the annual report.

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council will consist of the Chair of the Section and the Executive Coordinator, six members to be elected two each per year for terms of three years each, and the Chairs of each of the five American Literature Divisions. The six elected members will not be eligible for successive re-election. If any member of the Council expects to be absent from its annual business meeting, that member can give a proxy to vote to a person from the following group: the Chairs of the Standing Committees, the Editor and the Members of the Board of Editors of *American Literature*, and the Secretaries of the Division. The Council will hold at least one session at each business meeting of the Section.

The Council will make nominations to the standing committees, to the Board of *American Literature*, and to the Council and certify all nominations submitted by members of the Section; after the balloting is completed, it will certify the election of candidates duly chosen

according to the provisions of these articles; and it will consider such matters of policy as may be brought before it and make appropriate recommendations to the Section and the Divisions.

Standing Committees

Members of these committees will be appointed by the Chair of the Section upon the recommendations of the Advisory Council or as specified herein.

1. *Executive Committee.* It will consist of the Chair of the Section, the Executive Coordinator, and one other member of the Section selected by the Chair. The immediate past Chair of the Section will serve as an ex officio advisory member of the Executive Committee. The Committee will have power in all urgent matters that require action between meetings of the Section.

2. *Hubbell Award Committee.* It will consist of five members, oriented to four regions and serving five-year terms. The Chair of the Award Committee will be the member serving his or her fifth and last term. The Committee will be responsible for nominating candidates for the Hubbell Medal according to provisions adopted by the Advisory Council. The Executive Committee will appoint the Executive Coordinator of the Section with the advice and consent of the Advisory Council.

3. *Foerster Award Committee.* It will consist of three voting members of the Section appointed annually by the Chair of the Section. It will be responsible for selecting the best essay in *American Literature* during the calendar year.

Nominations and Elections

The annual general election will include the officers of the Section and two members of the Advisory Council. The two members of the Advisory Council in the second of their three-year terms will constitute the annual slate for the election of the Chair of the Section. The winner of this election will serve as Chair in

the following year. Nominations for the annual general election of the Section will come from a Nominations Committee of three members of the Advisory council chosen annually by the Chair of the Section.

Upon receiving from the Advisory Council the names of approved nominees, the Executive Coordinator will announce the names at the business meeting of the Section and in his or her annual report to all members of the Section.

Each year, the Executive Coordinator will mail to each voting member of the Section a ballot containing the nominations. Thus circulated, these names constitute a ballot to be marked and returned to the Executive Coordinator not later than December 1. It will be the duty of the council to certify the election of candidates. The Executive Coordinator will announce the results of the election at the annual business meeting.

Whenever vacancies occur in any elective offices, the Executive Committee will appoint a member of the section to serve out the unexpired terms in all cases except those of Chair and of Executive Coordinator. The Executive Coordinator will serve out the unexpired term of the Chair. The Advisory Council will appoint someone for the unexpired term of the Executive Coordinator.

American Literature Divisions

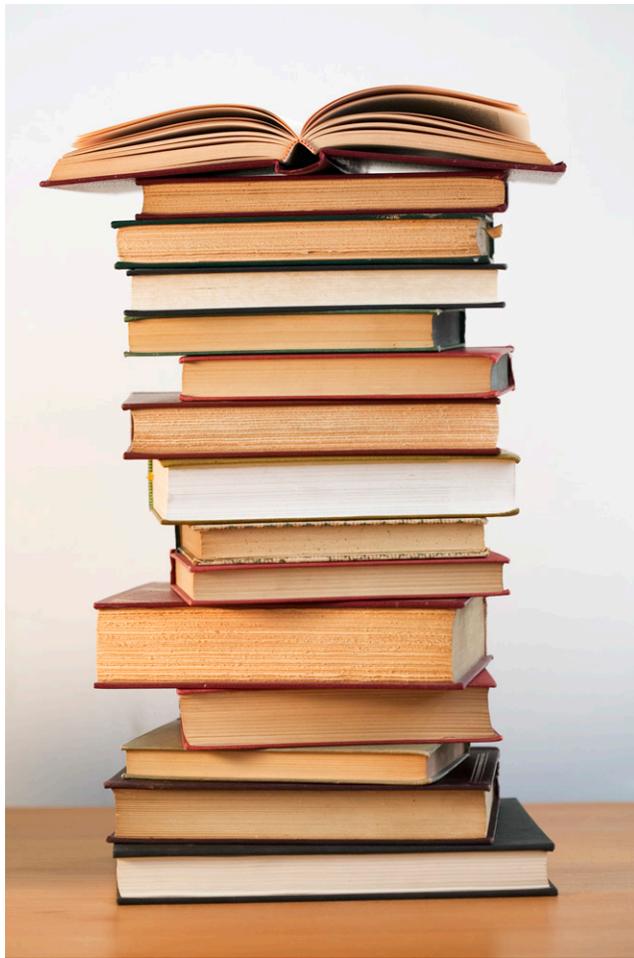
In order to preserve the advantages of a unified American literature organization within the Modern Language Association, an organization that can effectively plan and sponsor projects research and publication, the divisions will be represented by voting members on the Advisory Council.

The Section and the Divisions will work intensively and conscientiously to preserve and strengthen the unity of the American literature establishment as a whole. If the officers and Executive Committee members are not already members in good standing of the Section, they should become members.

Amendments

Proposed amendments to these Articles of organization originate with the Advisory Council. Copies of the amendments approved by the Council will be mailed to all members of the Section with the final ballots or published in the Executive Coordinator's Report or in *American Literature*. Proposed amendments submitted to the Council too late to receive circulation before the annual meeting will not be voted on until the following year.

All ballots will be submitted in writing and signed. A proposed amendment will be adopted if approved by a majority of the total number of votes cast.



Minutes of the American Literature Section Meeting

December 27, 2006

Marriott Hotel; Philadelphia

Phil Barrish called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Results of the recent elections for the council were announced. Sandra Zagarell was elected chair, with her term to begin in January. Ralph Bauer and Rachel Adams were elected as the two new council members. (In the fall before the final year of their term, they will be candidates for chair).

Professor Barrish thanked the members of the For-ester Prize committee, chaired by Sara Blair of the University of Michigan. Jeff Allred was selected as winner for his article, "From Eye to We: Richard Wright's 12 Million Black Voices, Documentary and Pedagogy." Caleb Smith was recognized with an honorable mention given to his essay, "Emerson and Incarceration."

Professor Barrish thanked the Hubbell Award committee, chaired by Gordon Hutner, for their work. The winner for 2006 is Henry Louis (Skip) Gates.

Hubbell Award Committee for 2006:

Gordon N. Hutner (U of Kentucky), 2006 Chair
Viet Nguyen (U of Southern California), 2007 Chair

Wai Chee Dimock (Yale U), 2008 Chair
Douglas Anderson (U of Georgia), 2009 Chair
Dana Nelson (Vanderbilt U), 2010 Chair

Council members were urged to bring graduate students to the awards ceremony and cash bar and to encourage their colleagues to bring guests as well. This recommendation was made in the context of a discussion about section membership levels, which have been declining over the past several years. Sheryl Meyering and Brian Ragen, outgoing executive coordinators, reported that membership stood at approximately 1,000 eight years ago but now hovers around 500. Discussion of ways to attract new members included publicizing benefits associated with the dues, including access to past issues of *American Literature* online and access to the most recent issues. Graduate student membership rates are actually quite reasonable, it was suggested, given that the \$25 fee for section membership for students is only \$1.00 more than the basic subscription rate for *American Literature*. General membership is \$60 but includes both *American Literature* and *American Literary Scholarship* for the year.

Another suggestion for boosting membership was to give out forms and an explanation of benefits at the 2007 MLA panels sponsored by the section, as well as at sections sponsored by the various American Literature divisions.

Priscilla Wald, American Literature editor, gave the annual report for the journal. Wald pointed to several major shifts in personnel, including the departure of Houston Baker from Duke to Vanderbilt and the loss of the associate manager who had been working with Frances Kerr. Professor Wald has chosen to work without an associate editor at this point, although she reported that she is considering recruiting a colleague. She also explained that Emily Dings has recently joined the staff as associate manager under Frances Kerr.

Another important change for the journal over this past year was the move to online submissions. Wald noted that, as with other journals that have made this shift in process, the number of submissions has increased substantially. She suggested that the increase represents one of several mixed results from the change, since the increase in quantity has come at a time when there is a backlog in accepted pieces for the journal. Pointing out that the publication of several special issues has also contributed to the backlog, she indicated that the journal editorial board and staff are committed to reducing the current two-year wait time between acceptance and publication. One strategy supporting that goal will be to avoid any more special issues for the time being.

Professor Wald praised the editorial board members for their hard work and thoughtful responses to all submissions they review.

Wald also thanked Sheryl Meyering and Brian Ragen for their service as executive coordinators.

A proposal was made that, in the future, only one winner (and no runners-up) be named for the Forester Prize each year. After a brief discussion, the council voted to accept this proposal.

Brian Ragen gave a report on the ALS website. Professor Ragen highlighted, in particular, the website's archiving of citations and acceptance speeches by Hubbell award-winners from the past decade.

Sandra Zagarell, incoming ALS chair, facilitated a discussion about potential topics for the section panels at MLA for the 2007 convention. Possible topics considered by the council included a "taking stock" session addressing such questions as "Where have we been?" and "Where are we going?" in the

field of American Literature. Another potential topic discussed was "intersections," with a goal of bringing together diverse, generative approaches and themes currently claiming attention in the field--e.g., history of the book meets readers in history; aesthetics and sociological approaches, transnationalism intersecting with regionalism, nationalism, and other geographic frameworks. Over the course of discussion, the group moved to a topic on networks and another on languages as potentially productive, not only for one of the section sessions but also as a possibility that the various divisions might take on, through the particular lenses they use as division groups. Several division chairs committed to proposing this topic to their committees in meetings they would be holding later in the convention. If some divisions do indeed embrace some version of this topic, it was pointed out, the section could support cross-division participation by helping to distribute the calls and could help advertise the sessions themselves for the 2007 convention.

This lively examination of the potential benefits from linked sessions led to a broader discussion of ways that the section might improve communication and collaboration with its constituent divisions. One suggestion made, in this regard, was to include both current and upcoming division chairs in the invitation to attend the council meeting for 2007. Another was to use email earlier in the year to support exchange of ideas, both for governance of the section and for linked sessions at the convention.

Sheryl Meyering made a proposal that future memberships for the Hubbell awards committee should be focused on senior faculty, at least at the associate level. Since committee members do serve for five years, she noted, they need not be full professors at the start of their terms. However, given the emphasis the award places on lifetime achievements in the field of American literature, it would likely be difficult for assistant professors to serve with confidence. The council reached a consensus, through discussion of this item, that future committee members should come from associate or full professor ranks.

Sandra Zagarell invited division representatives to recommend potential members for the section nominating committee (which prepares a slate for council candidates) and for the Hubbell awards committee. Zagarell suggested that potential members for these committees might be identified during the various division committee meetings to be held during the 2006 MLA convention.

Phil Barrish adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Robbins