

The University of Michigan

Department of English

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**2006 Alumni
Newsletter**

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR



Sidonie Smith,
Department Chair

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Greetings from the Chair!

We're well enmeshed in the fall term, teaching in excess of 6000 students in courses ranging from freshman writing to graduate seminars. It's been an exciting fall in many ways, especially since we've just welcomed nine new faculty members, about whom you can read in the pages ahead.

We also welcomed fifteen new doctoral students. Just recently, Gregg Crane, the Director of Graduate Studies, organized a trip for them to Chicago and the Newberry Library. After the comfortable train ride through a Michigan landscape shimmering with fall colors, the students arrived in Chicago and proceeded immediately to a tour of the Newberry. Then they spent all day Saturday looking up archives as they pursued their own research projects. The weekend certainly helped our students bond with each other, and their time spent holding old books and papers in their hands enabled them to feel and smell the pleasures of scholarly research.

As you know from last year's newsletter, we have been revising our concentration curriculum under the leadership of Anne Curzan, Director of Undergraduate Studies. During the 2004-05 year, we agreed to introduce sub-concentrations and also reached agreement on what these would be. Having defined our goals for coherence within the concentration, we turned to our gateway courses. Many of you recent graduates will remember English 239 (What is Literature?) and 240 (Introduction to Poetry) as dual pre-requisites. Our current 239 will become a revised 300-level course entitled Introduction to Literary Studies and will be the pre-requisite for concentration in English. Our current 240, much loved by faculty who teach it, will become a required 300-level course. We want all students who move into the concentration to have completed Intro to Literary Studies, and we feel that the Poetry course must remain an essential component of our students' learning experience.

Over the past year, English faculty have won many honors and awards. Eric Rabkin received last year's student-sponsored Golden Apple Award for his excellence in teaching. Nick Delbanco earned a Distinguished University Professorship, the highest honor awarded by the University. Enoch Brater earned a Collegiate Professorship, the highest honor awarded in LS&A. Anne Curzan received a

2007 Henry Russel Award in recognition of her "exceptional scholarship and conspicuous ability as a teacher"—one of the highest honors the University bestows upon junior faculty members. Jennifer Lutman received the Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award for 2006 from Rackham, having been selected from nominees across the University. This is an impressive award indeed, recognizing outstanding scholarship, passion for learning and teaching, and commitment to excellence in teaching, mentoring, and service. Patsy Yaeger was named the new Editor of *PMLA*, the Modern Language Association's premier journal in our field. Scotti Parrish's recent *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World*, won Phi Beta Kappa's Ralph Waldo Emerson Prize for 2006 as a "scholarly stud[y] that contribute[s] significantly to interpretations of the intellectual and cultural condition of humanity." And Buzz Alexander won the CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) Professor of the Year Award.

Those of you who tell stories of your days in Ann Arbor might want to know that Larry Goldstein's anthology of writings about Ann Arbor, *Writing Ann Arbor: A Literary Anthology*, came out last year from the University of Michigan Press.

In December we say "good retirement" to George Bornstein, who has taught at Michigan since 1970. In honor of George's retirement and his decades of leadership in Modernist Studies, we are holding a conference that will celebrate exciting scholarship in the field. We offer here a series of pieces by our modernists, suggesting the diversity and richness of contemporary Modernist Studies.

And finally, we have had another remarkable year of fundraising on behalf of the Department and its many programs. Details are highlighted within. As you know, the state of Michigan is in a financially constrained situation, dependent on an automobile industry under pressure and in transition. Our Department is committed—as is the University—not only to surviving the downturn in the state's economy but to enhancing the excellence of our programs, our students, and our faculty through innovative scholarly and curricular initiatives. We depend upon your good will and your generosity in this venture. And we thank you for that generosity.

Professor of the Year

Excerpts from William “Buzz” Alexander’s remarks on acceptance of the CASE Professor of the Year Award

First, I wish to thank the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education for this award. I am grateful and humbled that you saw fit to select me. And I am especially grateful because your award inevitably recognizes that the work of the Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP) rises out of a largely invisible national crisis.

When I came to Michigan in 1971, we had three or four prisons and around 3,000 prisoners. We now have 52 prisons and nearly 50,000 prisoners. In 1970, our national prison population was 200,000. At the end of 2004, it was nearly one and a half million, a more than six-fold increase. This policy of social control through mass incarceration, initiated in the 70s, is built on a series of laws that keep men and women in prison on a scale unmatched elsewhere in the world, to the point that over 10 percent of our incarcerated citizens will leave prison in coffins. This policy has destroyed millions of individuals, has taken them away from their homes during the long, most productive years of their maturity, has doomed half of their children to prison, and has destroyed selected neighborhoods and communities. This policy is so disguised and justified that most of the bright, eager students who come to the University of Michigan have no idea it exists. My teaching and the work of PCAP have been a limited response to this crisis. . . .

This is not an individual award. I am receiving it on behalf of my students in PCAP and the several thousand incarcerated youth and adults in Michigan who have worked with them. It is they who have earned it.

The students have entered my classes knowing there is something they must find out that no one has told them and realizing that the knowledge might change their lives. In the prisons, juvenile facilities, and community they encounter terrible pain and oppression, and they find wonderful creativity, resilience, and resistance. They learn the economics of incarceration. And they respond on their own terms. Some of them join PCAP. They inspire me with

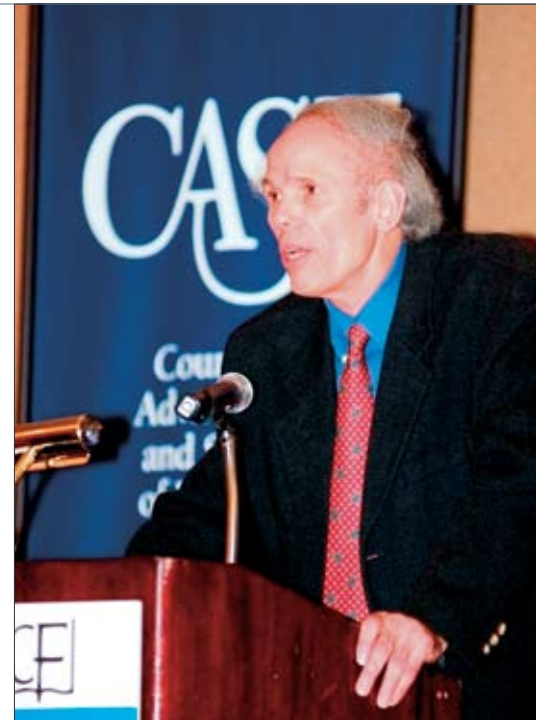
their insistence, creativity, hard questioning, reflection, risk-taking, and courage. They have taught me more than I can say, and I wouldn’t be here without them.

The incarcerated who have entered our workshops and exhibitions seize upon the creative collaborative spaces we provide to tell their stories, own their histories, make their own images, and create new relations and lives. Living in extremely restricted conditions, they are hungry for learning and creation, they are full of struggle and laughter and risk-taking and resilience and courage. They have taught me and my students more than I can say.


It has been my great fortune to have been teaching all these years at the University of Michigan. I have had, and PCAP has had, nothing but incredible support at every level in this great institution, including and especially in my home unit, the Department of English Language and Literature, and in the School of Art and Design. I cannot sufficiently thank the administrators, colleagues, and staff who have been behind us at every moment.

As the quality and responsibility of our work has become evident, we have been increasingly supported by the Michigan Department of Corrections at every level, by Director Patricia Caruso and by hard-working, program-oriented special activities directors, correctional staff, and wardens. . . . We are grateful for this support.

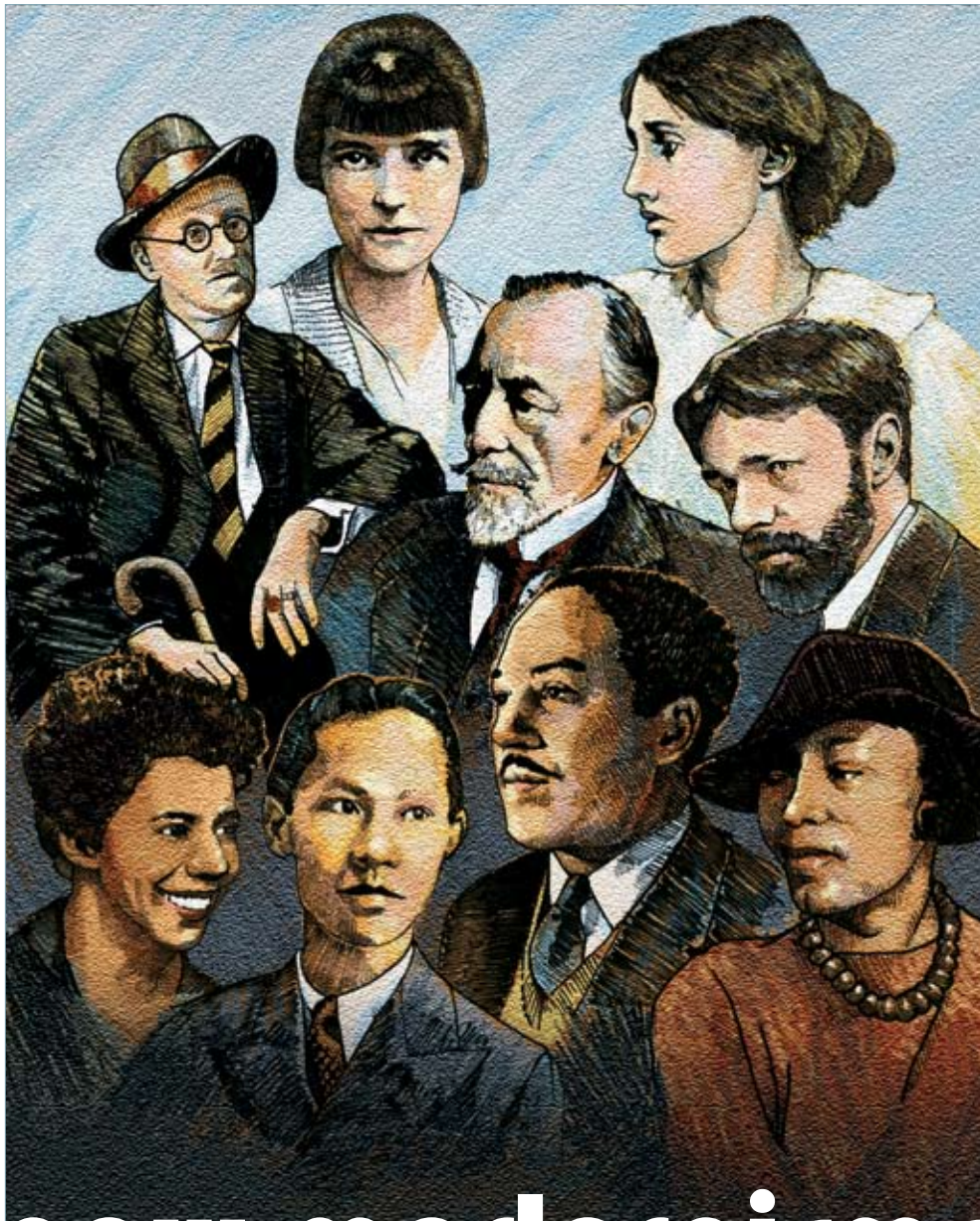
. . . But most of all I wish to express my debt to four of my greatest mentors, three lifers and an ex-lifer in the prisons where I have worked. They live or have lived in the desperate condition of those who may never leave the walls, and they have taught me more than anyone what it means to be a human being. Their love for others, their courage, their laughter and resistance, their daring to create hard and true stories, their struggle to maintain the light in their souls, their great spirit are all part of who I have tried to become, and they stand behind every piece of our work. Thank you, Mary Glover, George Norris Hall, Romando Valeroso III, and Sharleen Wabindato.



William “Buzz” Alexander
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor

 www.case.org
For more information on the
Professors of the Year program

 www.prisonarts.org
For more information on PCAP



Illustrations by Anthony Cece

new modernisms

Introduction

Sara Blair

In 1999, a group of scholars founded a professional society called the Modernist Studies Association. Its mission was to promote exchange of ideas about new ways of studying

literary modernism—or rather, as the organizers put it, “the modernisms” of literary and cultural experimentation, created not only by such perennial favorites as T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, but by a broader array of writers responding in splendidly varied ways to urbanization, proliferating

technology, war, racial violence, migration, and immigration: in short, to the array of epochal changes we call modernity. Broadening the field to encompass not only literary texts and their forms, modernist studies aims to reanimate, for readers a century later, the social landscapes in which those texts took shape—and which they in turn remade.

Broadening the field to encompass not only literary texts and their forms, modernist studies aims to reanimate, for readers a century later, the social landscapes in which those texts took shape—and which they in turn remade.

Questions about the role of literature have remained central. How do literary texts, from avant-garde drama to widely read novels and “little” magazines, make sense of the bewildering, exhilarating array of experiences and challenges that modernity poses? How do the soundscapes of the twentieth century, from the urban street and the syncopated rhythms of Tin Pan Alley and jazz to the rhythmic hum of the industrial machine, enter into experimental poetry? How do modernist texts look at newly visible citizens and subjects—African-American migrants and Eastern European immigrants, industrial workers, refugees, lesbians and gay men, veterans, shopwomen, suffragists; and how in turn do modernist images participate in social responses to such new identities? At one time, modernist literature was imagined as willfully distant from the social struggles (and

commercial practices) that define modernity. Now it is seen as an active participant in them—and all the richer, all the more provocative, for being so.

To this thriving field, members of Michigan's English department have visibly contributed. Some of our younger scholars explore the relationship between the experience of war in the trenches and on the home front, and the creation of new expressive forms (John Whittier-Ferguson); consider links between the modernist novel's exploration of interior life and new kinds of public spaces, e.g., the London Embankment, the modern flat (Andrea Zemplýs); argue for the importance of debates about language and national identity to twentieth-century narrative experimentation (Joshua Miller). Such work has developed in fruitful dialogue with the projects of our more senior scholars. In addition to her acclaimed *The Dialogic of Difference: An/Other Woman in Virginia Woolf and Christa Wolf*, Anne Herrmann has recently published *Queering the Moderns: pose/portraits/performances*, a study of gender and racial crossings as strategies of response to modernity. Enoch Brater's epochal work on Samuel Beckett and Arthur Miller has led to the publication of *Arthur Miller's America: Theater and Culture in a Time of Change*, a study of the cultural and social contexts Miller's work negotiated and shaped. Larry Goldstein has written widely on contemporary

poetry, poets, and the movies, on the automobile and the airplane as American cultural icons, and on the male and female bodies as objects of aesthetic representation, scientific study, and myth.

While widening the scope of modernist studies, Michigan's scholars have shaped critical methods by which these kinds of issues are explored. The MSA's eighth conference in 2007 will be titled "Out of the Archive"; among scholars who have most powerfully influenced current understandings of the importance of archival materials in thinking about the meaning and afterlives of literary texts is George Bornstein. In his role as President of the Society for Textual Scholarship, and in groundbreaking work—including *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* and *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture*, co-edited with U-M's Theresa Tinkle—George has argued for the significance of material forms (typefaces, design, layouts, formats, not "language" alone) to the creation of the meanings and value of literary works. Through his work on manuscripts and other archival sources, George has also contributed to the newly comparative emphasis in modernist studies, with recent work on African-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and the creation of modernist fiction, and on historical links between

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MICHAEL AWKWARD returns to Michigan as the Gayle Jones Collegiate Chair of Afro-American Literature and Culture. Michael began his career at Michigan in 1986 before leaving for positions at



Penn and Emory, where he was the Longstreet Professor of African-American Literature—and we're thrilled to have him back! Michael is the author of numerous books and articles including *Negotiating Difference: Race, Gender and the Politics of Positionality* (Chicago, 1995), *Scenes of Instruction: A Memoir* (Duke, 1995), and, forthcoming, *Soul Covers: Rhythm and Blues Remakes and the Struggle for Artistic Identity* (Auretha Franklin, Al Green, Phoebe Snow), (Duke, 2007).

AMY CAROLL comes to us from Duke University, where she received her Ph.D. in Literature in 2004, and Northwestern, where she was a Mellon Post-doctoral Fellow in English and Latina/o Studies. Her work engages with questions of performance in the context of Mexican and U.S. representations of the "New World Border." Her essays have appeared in a number of journals, including *Signs* and *The Drama Review*; and her poetry and prints have also appeared widely, in journals like *Talisman*, *Carolina Quarterly*, and in Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating's anthology, *The Bridge We Call Home*.



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the Harlem Renaissance and the cultural revolution in early twentieth-century Ireland.

In my corner of the field—the study of U.S. modernism—the ongoing work of redefinition has resulted in exciting conjunctions. Familiar texts of high modernism are now set in fluent conversation with the cultural experimentation of the Harlem Renaissance; with multilingual texts by such writers as Henry Roth and Carlos Bulosan; with traditions of socially conscious and popular writing. The result is a richer sense of the formal innovations and the social resonances of all these bodies of work. My work brings to bear on literary texts an interest in visual culture, an increasingly definitive aspect of everyday experience after the turn of the twentieth century. From the stereopticon (a device for enjoying images of “exotic” places and spectacles, including racial, ethnic, and working-class ghettos) and early film to the portrait cards exchanged by genteel Americans and the photographic “documents” of Depression-era have-nots, visual objects shaped social ideals, responses, and rhetorics, and such objects exerted a powerful influence on modernist writers aiming to negotiate the relationship between social challenges and aesthetic possibilities. In a book I’m completing this year, titled *Harlem Crossroads: Black Writers and the Photograph in the Twentieth Century*, I argue for the central importance of photographic practice and images to the work of

such writers as Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Lorraine Hansberry. In their collaborations with photographers, and their creation of experimental and socially conscious photo-texts, these writers work to invent new expressive forms responsive to the energies—liberatory, radical, violent—of their times. Read as self-conscious responses to a rapidly diversifying culture, such participants in America’s modernisms(s) speak more fluently than ever of their moment, and to our own.

Multilingual Modernism

Joshua L. Miller

A comparison of the course offerings of almost any English Department in the United States today—including Michigan’s—with those of ten or twenty years ago will illustrate significant changes due to multiculturalism. Why did these changes occur, and where do we go from here?

The turn toward the study of transnational movements, organizations, and contacts emerged from innovative scholarship in the 1980s and ‘90s on nationalism and social identities. Examinations of nationalism also led to significant engagements with theories of race and ethnicity, postcolonial and indigenous studies, gender and sexuality studies, and globalization

theories.

These intersecting conversations prompted the field that goes under the rubric “American Studies” to a critical reevaluation of itself. Its very appropriation of the term “American” from the rest of the Americas led scholars in the 1990s to reconsider the role of the U.S. in the Americas in the spirit of journalist and critic José Martí’s 1891 anti-imperial call for a hemisphere not dominated by U.S. interests, “Nuestra América” [“Our America”]. This new scholarship viewed the U.S., controversially, both as an empire and as a site of ongoing, complex relations of desire, violence, appropriation, mimicry, and exclusion. Simultaneously, race and ethnic studies challenged Anglo-dominance by documenting the vibrant and long-standing cultural contributions and strategies of resistance by African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Jews, Latino/as, and Native-Americans.

Despite these substantial changes to the fields of American Studies and U.S. literature, one form of hierarchy that did not immediately come under scrutiny was the privileged status of English and the consequent reluctance to teach or discuss non-English cultures within the nation. The political ideology that has argued for language restrictions on citizenship (U.S. Americans must speak English) remains a potent issue today. Not until 1998, when Werner Sollors published *Multilingual America*, did a

collection of essays on this topic exist. Since then, the topic has become a subject of considerable attention, including anthologies of recovered texts in non-English languages, sociolinguistic studies of speech forms, dictionaries of Spanglish and other mixed languages. In recent years, the American Studies Association has dedicated several annual convention topics to the U.S. in transnational and multilingual contexts, including the 2007 meeting, whose theme is “América Aquí: Transhemispheric Visions and Community Connections.”

Readers of early twentieth-century U.S. literature have long been familiar with strikingly discomfiting art, but scholarship on modernism has only begun to address the centrality of its transnational and translational linguistic tensions. Driven by the ethos of defamiliarization, modernists transformed familiar and habitual elements of everyday life into unpredictable and strange forms, creating an aesthetics of fragmentation and mixture as they generated self-consciously “new” literature for an unprecedented age. Writers wittily re-scripted existing literary genres and forms, in part by resisting the expectation that literary works must be written in one language. A wide range of U.S. modernists—including such notable figures as Carlos Bulosan, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, Henry James, Claude McKay, Américo Paredes, Ezra Pound, and Henry Roth—translated from and wrote in non-English

languages. In many cases, their works drew on multiple languages simultaneously, creating hybrid narrative languages like Franglais, Spanglish, Yinglish, and so on. And I have not even mentioned the vast number of authors, from Creole New Orleans to the Mexican Southwest and in urban communities where Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Yiddish—among others—were spoken, who wrote entirely in these non-English languages. Newspapers in non-English languages also thrived during these years as the numbers of readers swelled.

Meanwhile, other U.S. modernists wrote in transformed registers of English, including vernaculars, “slanguage,” and invented idioms. Gertrude Stein’s syntax was so distinctively odd that it was lampooned as “Steinese,” though she enjoyed such responses, noting that those who derided her sentences were the same readers who quoted her accurately. African-American writers James Weldon Johnson, Jean Toomer, Sterling Brown, and Zora Neale Hurston debated whether and how vernacular speech forms might be reclaimed from racist connotations. In the book that I am currently completing, I argue that multilingual and vernacular U.S. modernist authors represent a neglected literary tradition, multilingual modernism. Through their depictions of U.S. Americans, these authors documented the

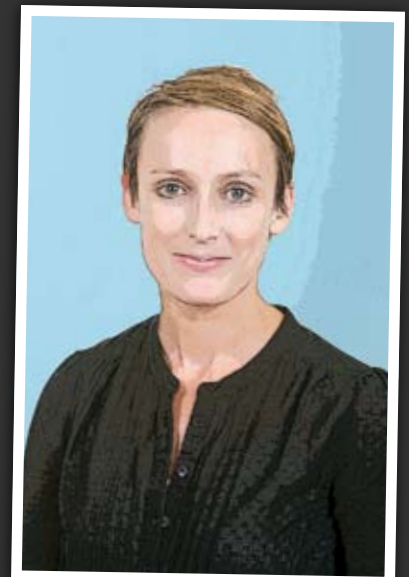
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MICHAEL BYERS, a former Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, holds an MFA from the University of Michigan (1996) and is the author of two books, *The Coast of Good Intentions*, a book of stories, and *Long for This World*, a novel. He is currently at work on a novel about the discovery of Pluto in 1930. *The Coast of Good Intentions* won the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award, garnered a Whiting Writers’ Award, and was a New York Times Notable Book, among other citations. *Long for This World* was also a New York Times Notable Book, was



a finalist for the Washington State Book Award, won the Virginia Commonwealth University First Novel Award, and won the annual prize for fiction from Friends of American Writers. His fiction and nonfiction have appeared in *Best American Short Stories*, *Best American Travel Writing*, *Prize Stories: The O. Henry Awards*, and several other anthologies.

LUCY HARTLEY arrives at Michigan from the University of Southampton, where she taught from 1995 until 2006. She’s the author of *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge, 2001) and numerous articles and essays. Hartley is currently working on a book about the social and political uses of the aesthetic in the nineteenth century.



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falsity of the notion that the U.S. was or would become an English-only nation. All of these novels were written primarily in formal and recognizable U.S. English, but they encouraged readers to question the presumed “standard” by injecting exciting and seductive non-English languages, vernacular speech, and transliterated immigrant accents.

The flourishing of multilingual literatures in the first half of the twentieth century challenged the notion that U.S. English was a national “standard.” These authors invented new narrative idioms that used the formal aesthetics of modernism to represent the surprisingly deft accents of vernacular speech. The arresting writings of linguistically experimental interwar writers opened a wide debate over the boundaries of U.S. citizenship, national culture, and literary modernism itself.

Our perspective from the twenty-first century suggests that studies of both transnational and national modernisms will require ever more multilingual conversations

Gendered Modernisms

Anne Herrmann

A Room of One's Own (1928) is a slim little volume in which Virginia Woolf imagines she has female literary precursors (Jane Austen, Emily and Charlotte

Bronte, George Eliot), but no female contemporaries. Her contemporaries are T.S. Eliot, whom she publishes, and James Joyce, whom she prefers not to read. But of course she has female contemporaries: Jane Mansfield, whom she greatly respects for her perfecting of the modernist short story and whose passing at the age of 35 she very much mourns; and Vita Sackville-West, whom she admires not for her writing, which she finds too conventional, but for her sexual daring, including her impersonation of a wounded WWI soldier.

Sherrie Benstock in 1986 published *Women of the Left Bank 1900–1940*, a book that populates literary modernism entirely with women. Some of them are writers (Edith Wharton and Gertrude Stein), some of them run bookshops (Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier), some of them publish small magazines (Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap). They know each other; some of them live together; they write for each other.

In *No Man's Land* (1988), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar shifted the scene from the Left Bank of Paris, a community of mostly elite expatriate American women, to the trenches of WWI. Their discussion of women writers in the twentieth century would require three volumes, rather than the single volume they devoted to the nineteenth. No man's land is the site not just of national armies at war, but of the *War of the Words* (I) between

men and women. Women want to write and be published and men want women to publish them and sell what they have written. The solution is *Sexchanges* (II), whereby transvestism as metaphor reveals the sexual self to be merely another costume and sexual instability enables forms of impersonation in literary style. By the time Gilbert and Gubar complete Volume III, *Letters from the Front* (1994), which takes modernism past WWII, their project has been superseded by Rita Felski's *The Gender of Modernity* (1995). Women becomes gender; modernism becomes modernity; and literature becomes part of a larger understanding of culture. Factory workers, shopgirls and shoppers become as emblematic of the modern as women writing. Women take on the attributes of that which was traditionally masculine, i.e., the New Woman, while woman, such as Lulu in Pabst's *Pandora's Box* (1929), comes to represent a “non-alienated, and hence nonmodern, identity” that allows the masculine to enter modernity.

A gendered “modernism of the margins” expands a field still exclusionary in terms of class and race in order to look at parallel literary and social traditions—such as in the Harlem Renaissance, where Zora Neale Hurston and Nella Larsen are among the most influential writers and representations of New Negro manhood include men-loving men. This focus has also retrieved

isolated texts such as *Caballero: A Historical Novel*, co-written by Jovita Gonzalez and Eve Raleigh in the 1930s and 40s, about Mexican women in Texas, and Ella Cara Deloria's novel from the 1940s, *Waterlily*, a retelling of the life of a female Dakota (Sioux). Hurston and Deloria, incidentally, studied with the ethnographer Franz Boas, while Hurston and Gonzalez both practiced as folklorists.

Meanwhile a "deviant modernism" returns to the masculine modernism of Joyce and Eliot and rereads it from a queer perspective, to consider not just the relation between the sexes, but the male homoeroticism at play in the most canonical of modernist texts. A "Sapphic modernism" rereads the urtext of modern lesbianism, Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), to provide it with a new genealogy that includes a rereading of the censorship trial, fashion, the London female police force—all enabling a rereading of the novel itself.

If Virginia Woolf began a discussion of what it meant to be a woman writer in the 1920s, the twenty-first century has popularized her to the point where her face is perhaps more recognizable than her work, and her work decorates dishes sold by Pottery Barn with words from *A Room of One's Own*, "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well." Literary modernism has reached the point where it includes not just Virginia

Woolf, but where Virginia Woolf's words have entered the household.

War & Modernism

John Whittier-Ferguson

In 1937, Wyndham Lewis, the English painter, author, and editor, published his autobiographical account of the years we have come to associate with the greatest achievements of Anglo-American modernism. Its title, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, evokes his editorship of the avant-garde journal *BLAST* (published in June of 1914) and also his time as an artillery spotter during the Great War. In his title as well as in the text proper, Lewis, an exuberant satirist who characterizes himself as a "sardonic lion, in a particularly contemptible and ill-run Zoo," takes a grim delight in connecting the art of the modern age with its most terrible failure: total, world-encompassing war: "You will be astonished to find how like art is to war, I mean 'modernist' art. They talk a lot about how a war just-finished effects art. But you will learn here how a war *about to start* can do the same thing. I have set out to show how war, art, civil war, strikes and coup d'états dovetail into each other."

If revolutionary, even violent novelty is a hallmark of modern culture, if the "shock of the new"

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RYAN HARTY is the author of the story collection *Bring Me Your Saddest Arizona*, which won the 2003 John Simmons Award for Short Fiction. His stories have appeared in *Best American Short Stories 2003*, *The Pushcart Prize XXVII*, *Playboy*, *Tin House*,



The Missouri Review, and many other publications. He has received fellowships from the Corporation of Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony. At Stanford University he was a Stegner Fellow and Jones Lecturer. He received his MFA from the University of Iowa, where he was a Teaching-Writing Fellow. He is currently a Helen Hertzog Zell Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan.

PETRA KUPPERS comes from Bryant University, where she served as an Assistant and Associate Professor of Performance Studies, and Manchester Metropolitan University and Swansea College. She's written widely in performance studies, disability studies, and feminist and cultural theory; her books include *The Scar of Visibility: Medical Performance and Contemporary Arts* (Minnesota, 2007) and *Disability and Contemporary Performance: Bodies on Edge* (Routledge, 2003). Author of numerous essays, editor of several collections, she's also won fellowships in medical humanities (University of Texas Medical Branch), community dance (New Zealand), and the arts (Rhoide Island Foundation), among others.



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has long been considered an apt phrase for the impact of modern art, if resistances, challenges, surprises, and contestations are characteristic aspects of the cultural productions of the early twentieth century, then Lewis's linking of art and war makes at least figurative sense. Further, Lewis insists that sociopolitical conflict of all sorts necessarily shapes culture, not simply as war becomes a subject for artists, but as the fact and the conditions of war change human consciousness. Some sixty to a hundred million people died in the world wars that bracket the cultural productions of modernism, "the years of *l'entre deux guerres*," as Eliot wryly sums them up in *Four Quartets*, his great suite of poems of the Second World War. Those dead, along with the wars that produced them, have come to haunt the study of modernism today.

Though there was speculation during and after both world wars about the connections between war and literary culture, and though what many consider to be the foundational text of such analysis in the modern academy—Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*—appeared in 1975, it is really only within the past fifteen years or so that the relationship of modern culture to modern wars has an appropriately central place in the criticism and the teaching of modernism in English and American colleges and universities. And until fairly recently, the writing by those who fought in the wars and by

those non-combatants caught up in the wars' more general damage to humanity—the literature of witness—was cordoned off from those texts that were less immediately, less evidently affected by wartime. The paradigmatic instance of the segregation of the modernists from the most direct forms of writing about war occurs with W. B. Yeats's well-known decision to exclude Wilfred Owen and other poets of the Great War from his edition of *The Oxford book of Modern Verse* in 1936. (About that great lyric poet of the First World War, Yeats writes to Lady Dorothy Wellesley, "He is all blood, dirt, and sucked sugar-stick.")

Though humans can indeed be mastered by suffering, undone by trauma, rendered infantile or bestial by the horrors of war, we have come to understand such regressions as an inescapable part of experience—experience ironically produced in the modern era on a vaster scale than at any other period of history. The historian Peter Fritzsche has suggestively wondered "whether trauma is itself a historical case, a manifestation of the social narratives by which modern subjects move about in historical time." Far from being exceptional, the military and civilian veterans of violence may increasingly come to be seen as typical modern men or women, fractured by exposures to traumatic experience, attempting to reassemble themselves through forms of storytelling, understanding in a

particularly personal, urgent way their predecessors' related attempts to put their lives in order.

I first began teaching a course in this department called "Writing about War in the Twentieth Century" on September 7, 2001. Events since that day have unfortunately made the teaching of the course more and more immediately relevant. Students come to my course with an already acute sense of how war changes even aspects of life—travel, reading, jokes, fashion—that might once have appeared relatively unconnected to conflict. They seem to me to be newly aware of the disturbingly contested range of meanings gathering around ideas of human society. They are also alive to shocking possibilities of transformation: how skyscrapers may become "the Pile," the human body or a piece of trash a bomb, an ordinary man or woman an exalted or depraved being.

Such ironies did not escape those earlier moderns, the modernists, whose works often speak to us now with a power that has been renewed by the events of the early twenty-first century. Consider in conclusion a small handful of instances where a twentieth-century writer feels time going backward, civilization undone. Here is the last scene in Virginia Woolf's last novel, written during the Battle of Britain, set in the summer of 1939, when an English country house and its inhabitants devolve and the book ends in a time

long before recorded history: “The window was all sky without colour. The house had lost its shelter. It was night before roads were made, or houses. It was the night that dwellers in caves had watched from some high place among rocks.” A few paragraphs earlier, one of the characters has been reading from H. G. Wells’s *Outline of History* (1919), and though she has been referring to this book throughout the afternoon, she finds herself, at the end of this long day, stuck back at our primitive beginnings: “‘Prehistoric man,’ she read, ‘half-human, half-ape, roused himself from his semi-crouching position and raised great stones.’” We must wonder for ourselves whether these stones are raised to build or to do battle. Wells himself, in an allegorical ghost story of 1937, *The Croquet Player*, offers an answer characteristic of the time of Woolf’s novel, poised between recollection of the First World War and the certainty of the Second: “Man, Sir, unmasked and disillusioned, is the same fearing, snarling, fighting beast he was a hundred thousand years ago. These are no metaphors, Sir. What I tell you is the monstrous reality. The brute has been marking time and dreaming of progress it has failed to make.” Wells and Woolf found even the most distant past speaking with painful relevance to the present state of the world. We, in turn, as we reread texts with a new appreciation for the conditions under which they were written, a new understanding of

some aspects of the world into which they came, have much to learn from the moderns’ experience of the monstrous realities of war.

Changing Modernisms, Changing Selves

George Bornstein

“It is after all a grrreat littttttery period,” wrote Ezra Pound exuberantly to his friend and sometime protégé T. S. Eliot in a letter that included suggestions for revising Eliot’s then-unpublished poem *The Waste Land*. That work would add to the luster of the movement that we now call modernism. For Pound it included T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, Marianne Moore, James Joyce, Hilda Doolittle (H. D.), William Carlos Williams, and a host of others. Nowadays the term evokes an even wider range of writers from African-Americans to white ethnics to producers of a world literature in English, and, as with the modernists themselves, also involves linkages with other arts, with popular cultures, and with political and social formations.

When I first began to study literary modernism in graduate school in the far-off 1960s, modernism referred

continued pg. 12 >

JULIE ORRINGER is a Helen Hertzog Zell Visiting Professor in the Department of English. Her short story collection, *How to Breathe Underwater*, was a New York Times Notable Book and the winner of the Northern California Book award. Orringer is a graduate of Cornell University and the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, and was a Truman Capote Fellow in the Stegner Program at Stanford University. Her stories have appeared in *The Paris Review*, *McSweeney’s*,

Ploughshares, *Zoetrope: All-Story*, *The Pushcart Prize Anthology*, *The Best New American Voices*, and *The Best American Non-Required Reading*. She was the recipient of a 2004-5 NEA grant for her current project, a novel set in Budapest and Paris in the late 1930s. She lived in Ann Arbor as a teenager, and graduated from Huron High School.



GILLIAN WHITE received her Ph.D. in 2006 from Princeton University, where she was a prize fellow at the University Center for Human Values. Her research is in modern and contemporary American poetry, and she is currently at work on a book project that explores the concern to represent “contingency” in contemporary poetics. She recently published a long review essay on Elizabeth Bishop in the *London Review of Books*.



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primarily to the group of Anglo-American experimental writers among whom Pound played such a crucial role. Because the modernists had been the darlings of the then-prominent New Critical approach to close reading of literary texts, their stock stood high in the academy. The New Critical emphasis on irony, paradox, balance, and treatment of art works (especially poems) as well-wrought urns worked especially well on texts like Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium," Moore's "Poetry," Joyce's *Dubliners*, and other works central to modernist achievement. In contrast, the formerly dominant Romantic poets had sunk to the bottom of the academic value system.

I have spent my entire career putting together periods, ideas, and social or political groups not often associated with each other. That effort underlay my doctoral dissertation and first book, *Yeats and Shelley* (1970). As I worked on it, academic colleagues bombarded me with questions like, "I can see why you want to write on Yeats, but why would you ever want to write on Shelley?" Undeterred then as now by fashionable shibboleths, I devoted the next decade to publishing books like *Transformations of Romanticism* and to arguing alongside those critics who saw a modernist/romantic continuity that has eventually become widely accepted. After all, Yeats had termed himself one of the "last

romantics," and Wallace Stevens had labeled his enterprise a "new romanticism."

Struck by important differences among versions of works as varied as Yeats's poems (which he revised repeatedly himself), Shakespeare (whom subsequent editors have reconstructed in different ways), the Bible (with differences in composition, assemblage, transmission, and translation), and the Treaty of Waitangi (with its three major versions, two of them in Maori) in New Zealand, I became interested in the 1980s in the differing constructions of texts. The process of publication from manuscript to print seems always to involve more people than the author and more versions of the text than one, while print representations of authors themselves resistant to print technology (like William Blake or Emily Dickinson) seem a far cry from the work that those authors actually produced. Publication itself involves production crews and is an inherently social act rather than one of individual genius transparently rendering itself. Such considerations led me into archives of both authors and publishers, and then to my own construction of several editions of W. B. Yeats, including two volumes in the Cornell Yeats series and, eventually, *Under the Moon: Unpublished Early Poetry of W. B. Yeats* published by Scribner.

As I delved into issues of textual construction and transmission, I became more and

more interested in the connections between textual construction and literary interpretation and between textual theory and literary theory. In some ways, the editor is the first critic of a work, whose decisions (How does Nella Larsen's novel *Passing* end? What does King Lear say when he dies? What is the "word known to all men" in *Ulysses*?) set the parameters of subsequent criticism and theorizing. Those interests led to staging, here at Michigan, several national conferences and then to editing several collections based on them, featuring a variety of scholars grappling with the issues. The resultant volumes include *Representing Modernist Texts* and *Palimpsest: Editorial Theory in the Humanities*, co-edited with our own Ralph Williams.

Meanwhile, the formerly lionized modernists of the New Critics (except for Joyce and H. D.) had become roadkill to critics nourished by poststructuralist theory. Both undergraduate and graduate students continued to love the modernist poets, but too many critics now rushed to dismiss them as "elitist" and "fascist"—charges so simplistic and distortive when made globally that it was hard for modernists to refute them. It occurred to me that attention to the material form of texts might offer a way to historicize modernists more accurately. If literary texts included not just words but also their physical embodiments, those materialities

could cast a powerful light on their social implications. The modernists, of course, had always known that, and Pound, Yeats, Moore, Alain Locke, or Langston Hughes expended considerable time and effort on the physical appearance of their books.

Our own particular historical moment, with its ongoing transition from print to digital culture, has demystified various means of transmission or publication and thrown their various qualities and limitations into prominence. Addressing this issue, another national conference was arranged, with Terri Tinkle, here at Michigan on *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture*, which again morphed into an influential book. To illustrate the potential of the new electronic media for literary study, I also a dozen years ago built the “Electronic Yeats Prototype,” which intrigued students and seemed innovative at the time, but now looks a bit quaint.

As always, such work took me back to literary interpretation. It resulted in still another book, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2001. That project argues for the importance of changing versions of the material text in materials ranging from the poetry of W. B. Yeats and Marianne Moore through Joyce’s *Ulysses* and a range of works from the Harlem Renaissance like the *New Negro* anthology which had rarely been studied from that

point of view. It also led to my current project on *The Colors of Zion: Blacks, Jews, and Irish a Century Ago*, which mines a wide range of materials from high to popular culture, from literature to film and cartoons, from Zionism to Irish and Black Nationalisms, and from poetry to the racist pseudo-science of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Our current stress on tensions and appropriations among ethnic and racial groups calls attention to only half of the story; while acknowledging the stresses and exploitation, I will argue in the new project for lost connections of support and mutual help as well. That offers both a more accurate and a more helpful model for thinking about such matters than the increasingly dated “positionality” and identity politics of the rapidly receding 1980s.

Looking back over nearly four decades as a publishing scholar, I am struck by how much our conceptions of modernism have changed, and by how much my own work has changed along with them. In remaking modernism, we remake ourselves, and every generation must learn to “make it new.” As Wallace Stevens reminds us, “It can never be satisfied, the mind, never.” ■


W. B. WORTHEN, J. L. Styan Collegiate Professor of Drama, has joined the Department from his previous position as Professor and Chair of the Department



of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He had previously taught as Professor of English and Professor of Theatre and Dance at the University of California, Davis; as Professor of English and Professor of Theatre, and Director of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Theatre and Drama at Northwestern University; and as Professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin. He was also one of the founding faculty members of the

International Center for Advanced Theatre Studies at the University of Helsinki, and has taught at the Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury College as well. Professor Worthen has lectured widely in North America and in Europe, most recently teaching at the University of Tampere, Finland, and the University of Lisbon. He is a past editor of *Theatre Journal* and of *Modern Drama*, and is the author of many articles and several books, including: *The Idea of the Actor: Drama and the Ethics of Performance* (Princeton UP, 1984), *Modern Drama and the Rhetoric of Theater* (U of California P, 1992), *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge UP, 1997), *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (Cambridge UP, 2003), and *Print and the Poetics of Modern Drama* (Cambridge UP, 2006). He is currently writing on drama and the technologies of reading.

The English Department is proud and happy to welcome these nine newest members of our faculty!

 www.lsa.umich.edu/english/faculty
For more information on our all our faculty, in addition to the nine members introduced here, please visit the English Department website.



Laura Kasischke ... in her words

People who read my work, and who don't know me very well, often seem surprised to discover I'm not a particularly morbid or grief-stricken person. At a reading once, my husband overheard one woman say to another, "I didn't expect her to be such a happy little person." But I am! Still, I'm inspired by solemnity to write. My poems often express sorrow, and my novels all record either a murder (four) or an accidental death (one). Early works I loved to

read were the Greek tragedies and the poetry of Larkin and Jarrell. The humor there is scary—the best kind of humor. My mother was a funny, optimistic person, but she never read me any prettified fairytales. I never heard how the pigs who built their houses out of straw and sticks escaped to their brother's brick house. Those pigs, in my mother's version, got ripped limb from limb and eaten by the wolf. To me, that was the heart of the story.



At Left: Laura Kasischke with *Boy Heaven*, her novel for young adults, the latest in a productive career that includes four other novels and six volumes of poetry.

At Right: Elizabeth Kostova with her acclaimed novel *The Historian*, recently #1 on the New York Times Bestseller List.



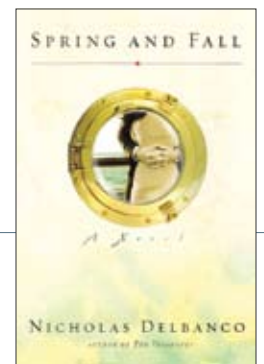
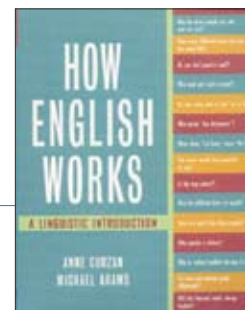
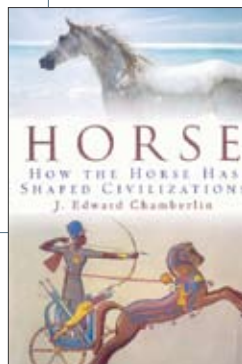
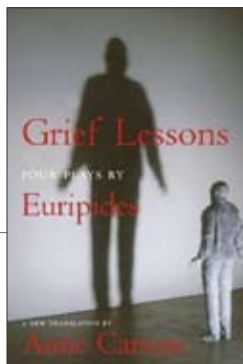
www.lsa.umich.edu/english/media

Visit the multimedia section of the Department's website to hear samples of various authors, including Laura Kasischke, reading from their work



Faculty Publications

Faculty Publications (L-R): Enoch Brater, *Arthur Miller: A Playwright's Life and Works*; Anne Carson, *Answer Scars* (not pictured), *Grief Lessons: Four Plays by Euripides* (translated with preface); J. Edward Chamberlin, *Horse: How the Horse Has Shaped Civilizations*; Anne Curzan, *How English Works: A Linguistic Introduction*; Nicholas Franklin Delbanco, *Spring and Fall*



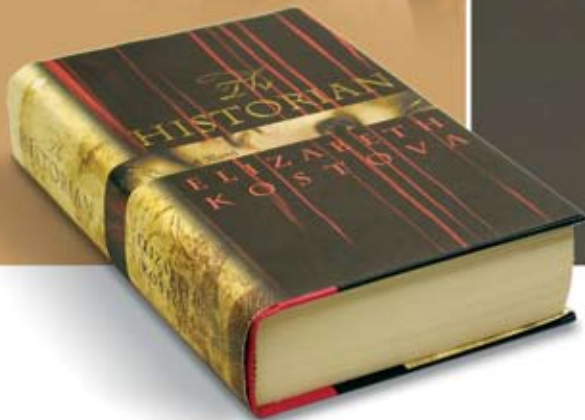


Elizabeth
Kostova

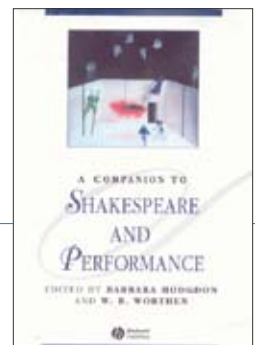
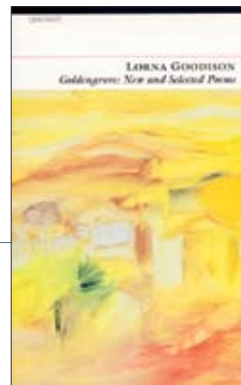
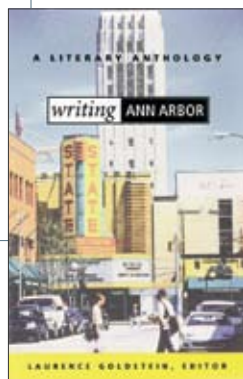
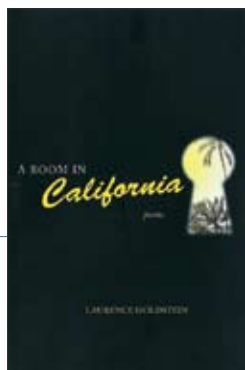
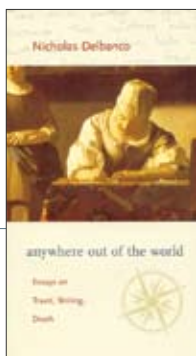
...in her words

I've been writing almost since I could hold a pen in my little fingers, and my writing has always come out of what I read—mainly the masters and mistresses of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century novel. Right now I'm reading Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* for the first time and it has me walking into walls. I also write short stories, poetry, and essays, although the rigor of those forms awes and frightens me. I prefer the forgiving capaciousness of the novel, and I like to believe, with E. M. Forster, that "Oh, dear, yes—the novel tells a story." I wrote *The Historian* first privately and for my own entertainment, then with help from the University of

Michigan's peerless English MFA program, and finally with the support of a Hopwood Award. The unexpected public success of the novel has been a challenge as well as a reward—I'm frequently faced by readers who pick up my book thinking it's about Dracula in a conventional sense and are surprised to find in it a serious discussion of East European history. Actually, I find my topics as writer are love in its various forms and the human obsession with history. I'm working on a new novel which promises to be equally baggy and is already requiring considerable research. I take daily ferocious pleasure in trying to express on paper the act of living.



Faculty Publications (L-R): Nicholas Franklin Delbanco, *Anywhere Out of the World*; Laurence Goldstein, *A Room in California*, *Writing Ann Arbor: A Literary Anthology*; Lorna Goodison, *Goldengrove: New and Selected Poems*; Barbara Hodgdon & W.B. Worthen, *The Blackwell Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*; Laura Kasischke, *Boy Heaven* (opposite page, top left)





Patrick O'Keeffe ...in his words

Soon after *The Hill Road* was published, a grandmother from Massachusetts wrote to say that she enjoyed the stories, particularly "The Postman's Cottage." She concluded her letter by thanking me for "keeping her grandfather alive, even if it's only in a story."

The characters and situations in the stories are fictional, but the landscape feels real.

The grandmother grew up in a rural village, in southwestern Ireland, not far from where I grew

up. She probably immigrated in the Forties or early Fifties. I walked through that village many times when I was young, a walk that lasted a few seconds. I would glance at the few old houses lining the street, one of which, several years before, was a pub owned by the grandmother's grandfather, whose name was Ryan. For the story, I needed a pub in the village. I believe I named the owner Ryan, for that was quite an ordinary name.



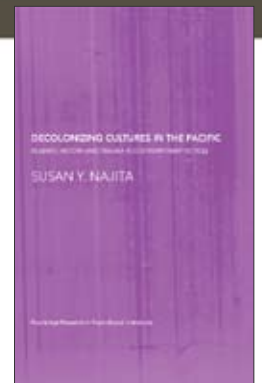
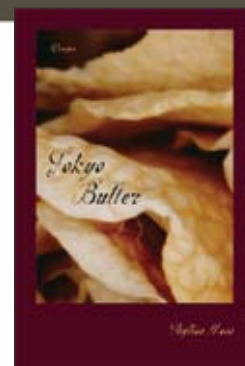
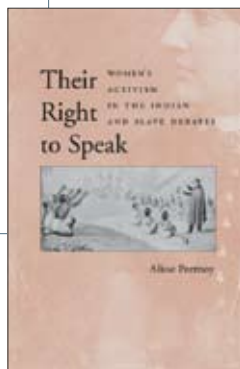
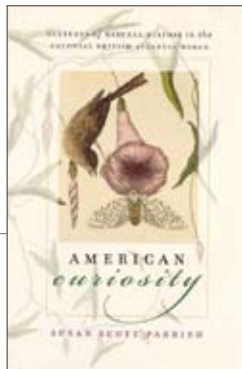
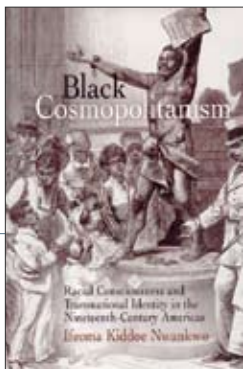
At Left: Patrick O'Keeffe with *The Hill Road*, recipient of both the Whiting Writers' Award and the 2006 Story Prize.

At Right: Davy Rothbart, occasional voice on NPR's *This American Life* and founder of *FOUND* magazine, with *The Lone Surfer of Montana, Kansas, and FOUND II*.

www.foundmagazine.com
For more information on Davy Rothbart and *FOUND* magazine



Faculty Publications



O'Keeffe photo by Valerie Lanken

Davy Rothbart ... in his words

On nights when I'm struggling with my writing, I'll find myself all of a sudden online, googling the title of my story collection *The Lone Surfer of Montana, Kansas*. What I'm looking for in those moments is encouragement from a stranger—someone's post in their LiveJournal, a mention on their MySpace page under Favorite Books. It sometimes feels like a desperate search, but just hearing one person's response to my book always gives me enough nourishment to keep writing.

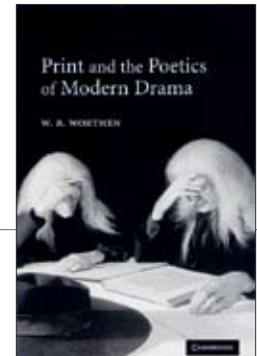
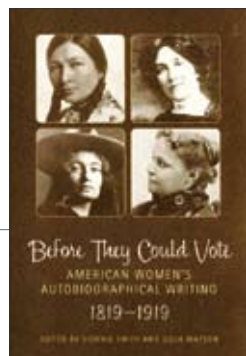
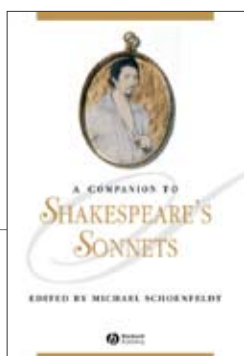
One day, doing my little Google creep, I stumbled across the online journal of a young Marine stationed near San Diego. He'd bought my book because he liked the cover and had mistakenly thought it would be about surfing. On one of his last nights before heading overseas, he'd gone for a long, brooding, introspective walk through town, carrying my book along. At a sad late-night diner, he'd read it cover to cover. Something in the stories seemed to crack him open, and he was slammed with the full force of feelings he hadn't really been allowing himself to feel. All kinds of life revelations

rained down on him, and in his journal he credited *The Lone Surfer of Montana, Kansas* for them, though, to be fair, he was in such an odd, reflective state that night, he might've had the same response if he'd read "Green Eggs and Ham." Still, the notion that my stories had touched this one sweet, confused soul so deeply fueled my writing for months to come. Every day I kept following the Marine's journal. He traveled to Germany, the Philippines, and then to Afghanistan. Finally, half a year later, he quit the military and moved back home to North Carolina to work as a bartender and to surf.



Faculty Publications, opposite page (L-R) Top: Thylia Moss, *Tokyo Butter*; Susan Y. Najita, *Decolonizing Cultures in the Pacific: Reading History and Trauma in Contemporary Fiction*; Bottom: Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo, *Black Cosmopolitanism: Racial Consciousness and Transnational Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Americas*; Susan Scott Parish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the British Atlantic World*; Alisse Portnoy, *Their Right to Speak: Women's Activism in the Indian and Slaves Debates*; Eric S. Rabkin, *Mars: A Tour of the Human Imagination*; Xiomara Santamarina, *Belabored Confessions: Autobiography and Black Women's Labor*

Below (L-R) Michael Schoenfeldt, *A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets*; Sidonie Smith, *Before They Could Vote: American Women's Autobiographical Writing 1819–1919*; Keith Taylor, *Guilty at the Rapture*; James Boyd White, *Living Speech: Resisting the Empire of Force*; W.B. Worthen, *Print and the Poetics of Modern Drama*



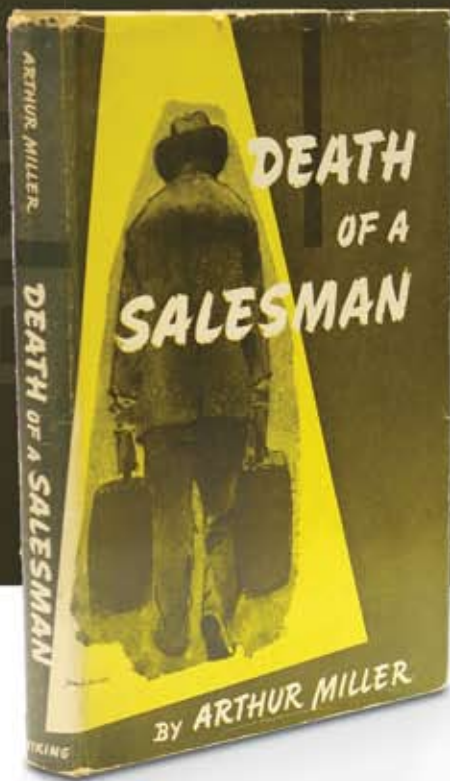
Hopwood 75th Anniversary

A note from the Director:

Before the semester-long celebration starts to feel like the receding past, and before we commence the planning for our centenary, let me say that the 75th Anniversary of the Hopwood Awards Program proved a full-fledged success. We did all those things that we premised and promised, and more. To wit, we mounted a mini-course of Hopwood-related films (taught by Peter Bauland and including *The Big Chill*, by Lawrence Kasdan, who came and spoke in April), a production of *The Gold Diggers* at the

Mendelssohn Theatre in February (directed by Philip Kerr), a panel on “Avery Hopwood Then and Now” (with Bruce Kellner, Jack Sharrar and Jack Stanley, Hopwood winner). We sponsored a series of readings by recent Hopwood winners (Laura Kasischke, Elizabeth Kostova, Bich Nguyen and Porter Shreve), a January poetry reading by ex-Hopwood Committee member Alice Fulton and a lecture titled “Losers” by Charles Baxter on the anniversary weekend itself. That lecture will be reprinted in the forthcoming special edition of *MQR*—an issue that will feature the work of Hopwood Winners since 2000 and will be co-edited by Laurence Goldstein and Nicholas Delbanco. Kathryn Beam and Peggy Daub of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Collections of Harlan Hatcher Library mounted a semester-long display of Hopwood memorabilia.

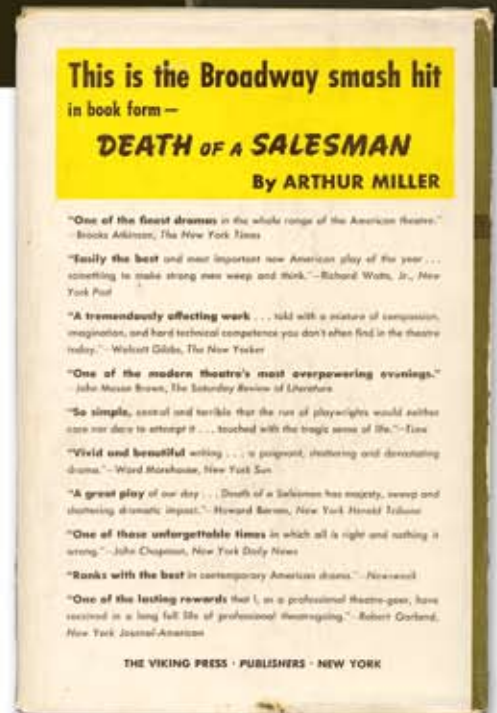
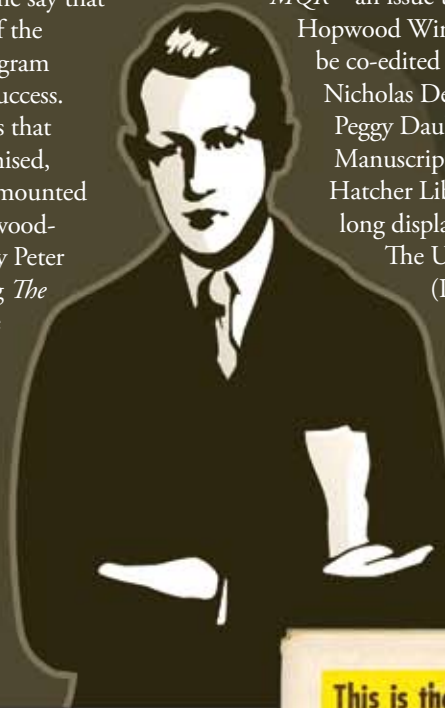
The University of Michigan Press (Philip Pochoda, Director, and LeAnn Fields, Editorial) published a volume in hardcover and paperback titled *The Hopwood Awards: 75 Years of Prized*



One of the Many

This first-edition print of former Hopwood winner Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is just one of the many rare finds housed in the Hopwood Room. This early hardcover print cost just \$2.50, features cover art by Joseph Hirsch and, on its inside jacket, a picture of the author in his early thirties.

Left to right: critical acclaim on the back cover; left inside jacket; endpapers representing Jo Mielziner's sets, to help readers visualize the stage version; right inside jacket.



Writing. This last was co-edited by Nicholas Delbanco, Andrea Beauchamp and Michael Barrett. Harvey Ovshinsky and Hopwood winner Oliver Thornton of HKO Media produced a video “Celebrating Hopwood: 75 Years of Writing Worth Reading.”

All along State Street banners waved; there were interviews and stories in local and national media. On Friday April 21, after the Hopwood Awards Ceremony and the Baxter lecture, we gave a banquet for roughly 250 celebrants; the next day we held a book-signing party for contributors to the anthology at Shaman Drum. So elaborate a series of celebrations could not have taken place without wide-spread help, and I want particularly to thank the offices and staff of Mary Sue Coleman, President, Lisa Rudgers, Vice President for Communication, Marvin Parnes, Associate Vice President for Research, and Lester Monts, Senior Vice Provost

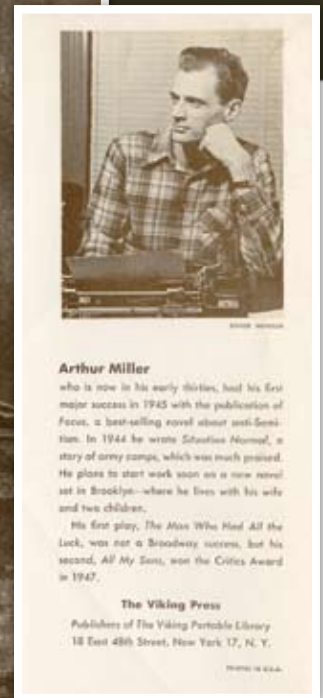
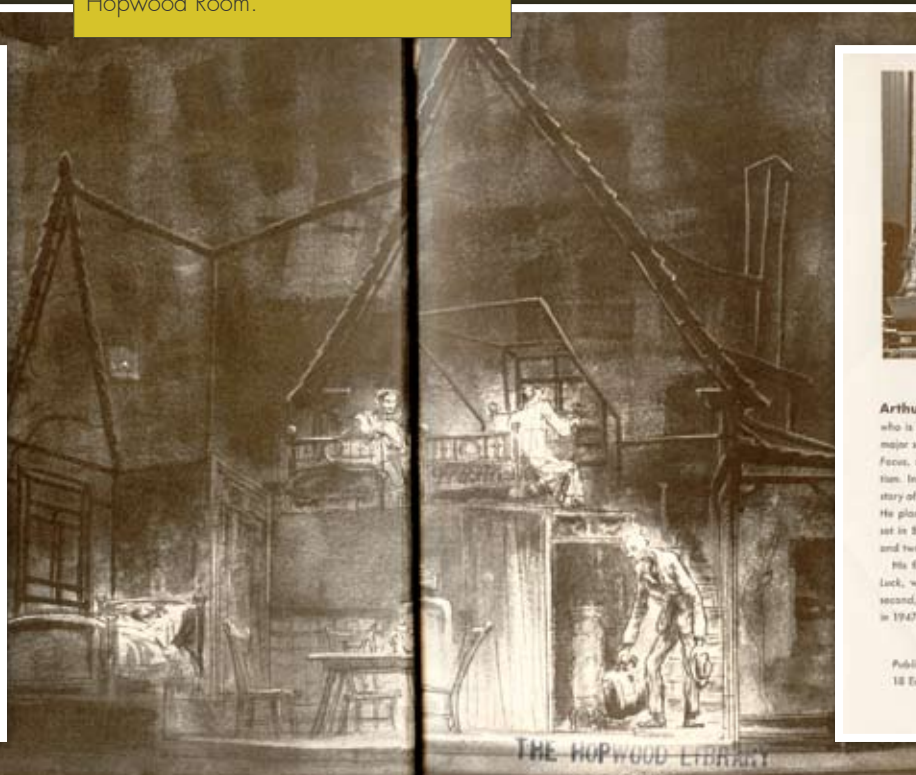
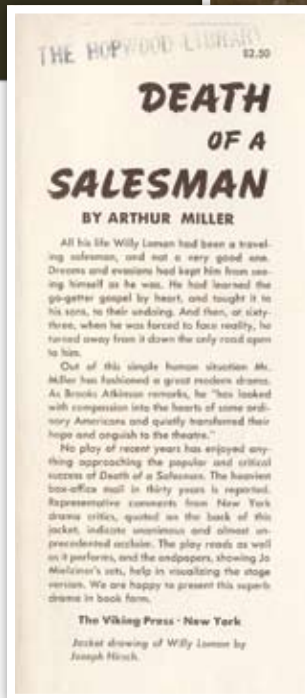
for Academic Affairs. Of the many individuals who supported us in addition, I am especially grateful to Peter and Rita Heydon of the Mosaic Foundation, Jerry May, Vice President for Development, and Margaret Burns-Deloria, the Assistant Dean for Advancement, College of LS&A. In the Hopwood Room itself we enjoyed the unstinting year-long help of Anna Blackburn and Monica Buckley as Student Program Assistants, of Michael Barrett as Special Assistant and—of course and crucially—Andrea Beauchamp herself. She is the doyenne of the Hopwood Room, both alpha and omega, our continuing spirit of place. We worked together for nearly two years on the planning of the 75th Anniversary program, and from start to finish it could not have succeeded without her: to Andrea Beauchamp, all thanks.

—Nicholas Delbanco



Nicholas Delbanco and Andrea Beauchamp sitting at the large periodical-covered table, a central, memorable, and inviting feature of the Hopwood Room.

Photo by Martin Violet for Michigan Today



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