



Biblio-Notes

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Notes from the chair

As I write in late September, we're all into new terms at our institutions. We've met new students and faculty and greeted the old. Many of us are planning for, or are in the middle of, serials cancellations and wondering how to meet the needs of our users with the resources we have at hand. We're trying to understand and implement the recent ACRL guidelines for information literacy. We're juggling the need to maintain the old media while obtaining the new. And we're realizing that many of our users have decided that libraries and librarians are simply irrelevant when Google is just a click away. In other words, we're 21st century librarians.

Members of LES are planning programs and discussions which we hope will prove timely and valuable. The Membership Committee, chaired by Susanna Van Sant generously offered to plan and lead discussion at the general membership meeting at Midwinter. The Program Planning Committee, ably steered by Chair Rob Melton, is hard at work putting together a program on Canadian literature for Annual in Toronto.

And yet we worry that we're not meeting your needs. Two to three hundred people attend our annual programs. Thirty to fifty people come to the general membership meetings. Only two librarians filled out the committee volunteer form. We worry about the silence.

How can LES help you carry out the responsibilities of your job? The LES Executive Committee is keenly aware that you pay a portion of your hard-earned salary to belong to LES, and we want to make sure that LES gives back what you need. Please take a moment and email me or another member of the LES Executive Committee to give your suggestions. Our addresses are at: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/les/officers01.html>

If you haven't filled out the LES Survey, please do so right now. It takes only a few minutes and will help us plan programs and offer discussions that will benefit you. The url is:

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/les/questions.html>

Communicate with us please. We're eager to hear your ideas so we can make LES better serve you.

Hoping to hear from you,
Michaelyn Burnette
University of California Berkeley
mburnett@library.berkeley.edu

A Day in the Life of a Humanities Librarian

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
...Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages

Last spring, I and thousands of medieval scholars from around the world converged on Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan for the 37th International Congress on Medieval Studies. We presented papers on countless facets of medieval literature and culture. You may have heard about it on National Public Radio (<http://www.npr.org/ramfiles/watc/20020504.watc.08.ram>). Topics included Chaucer (naturally), but also a recent movie based on Chaucer's "Knight's Tale," Piers Plowman, medieval textiles, musicology, dragons, and Beowulf.

There were far more papers than anyone could possibly listen to. There were certainly far more papers that interested me than I possible could get to, even if they hadn't been scheduled at the same time as each other. My program, which was the size of a large format paperback, was littered with pen marks and Post-it notes.

Strictly speaking, I didn't go as a medievalist, for my paper was actually on J.R.R. Tolkien, a modern British writer who happened to be a medievalist and one of the chief instigators of the modern fantasy genre. However, like many of the writers that inherited the genre, his works drew on medieval themes and motifs. More specifically, I was speaking on his use of Ovid's Pyramus and Thisbe story.

I stayed in a dorm. That was much more convenient than staying in a downtown hotel, where you have to rent a car (or know someone who is renting a car) because the campus is very far away from the downtown. I had stayed in the dorms during my last pilgrimage to Kalamazoo, some five years ago, but I had forgotten about the plain 1960s era cinder block walls. I had also forgotten that unlike ALA conference hotels, the Kalamazoo dorms do not provide clock radio alarm clocks. Fortunately, they did provide wake up calls.

While listening to a morning session paper the day before I was to give my own paper, I suddenly remembered that I had never checked for references to "Pyramus and Thisbe" in any of the Gale literature reference book series. Of course, several of those series had been within 20 feet of the Reference Desk that I work at, and I could have referred to them at any time during my three months of research. I was in an utter panic for fear that there might be some reference, some interpretation of the story that I needed to take into account for my paper. So during a break between sessions, I made a mad dash into the Western Michigan University Library. I had not made one of these mad dashes since my MA program, but the rote was very familiar. I grabbed every reference book that might be applicable, dashed to the online catalog, found the Ovid call number range, grabbed every study and commentary that might be applicable, and then rushed to the copiers. First, the card machine on that level wasn't working, so I had to dash downstairs. Then I had to switch copiers. I barely had enough cash to cover all my copies. The reference librarians were wonderfully patient with me. Apparently, I was not the first frantic presenter-to-be that they had encountered that week. Of course, when I skimmed my copies that night, there was nothing there

that I needed, but I felt all the better knowing that there wasn't. In addition to mad dashes, I gave my paper, attended other sessions, panel discussions, concerts, and dinners, and bought too many books at the booksellers' stalls. At the end of it all, I am left with a couple of things to ponder.

One is the experience of the patron. I had almost forgotten what it was like to be a panicked patron looking for something. Since I work in a library, I tend to do my research in increments. But many of our patrons don't. Instead, they make mad dashes between classes or appointments to find things. In fact, my own dash literally put me in the shoes of my patrons. Most people don't have correct change for the copiers. And many of them do need that book on Ovid, or Shakespeare, or Piers Plowman now. Not next week. Not even tomorrow, but now. I may not be able to get that book for them now, or even later, but I can still put myself in their shoes.

The other is the vital importance of attending conferences in the disciplines that we work with. Kalamazoo was an amazing experience. Not only did I get to mingle and converse with medievalists, but I got to watch them converse with each other, debate fine points of interpretation, and giggle with them as we listened to the annual Pseudo Society lectures (including "The Unexpurgated Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard"). More importantly, there was a real sense of intellectual joy. Maybe it was the critical mass of thousands of scholars. Maybe it was sleep deprivation. But it was a truly wonderful thing to be part of. And suddenly, everything that I do as a liaison librarian, from selecting books to helping freshman students learn how to use databases seemed all the more relevant and important because it is part of that arc of intellectual joy, the fire in the belly of academia.

Citation for Chaucer quote:

(lines 1-2, 12 from the Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in the *Riverside Chaucer*, edited by Larry D. Benson and published by Houghton Mifflin Company in 1987)

Jen Stevens
Washington State University
stevensj@wsu.edu

Call for Contributions to Proposed Book: Teaching Literary Research: Challenges in a Changing Environment

The LES Publications Committee is calling for proposals for contributions to a book with the working title of *Teaching Literary Research: Challenges in a Changing Environment*. Contributions to the book should address the challenges faced by faculty and librarians when teaching the research process or research methodologies to students in language and literary studies. Literary studies and their supporting library collections can be simultaneously conservative and cutting-edge. "The book" continues to be of utmost importance to the discipline, but networks, databases, and digital works all impact the research process of the literary scholar. This collection of essays will attempt to make sense of these challenges and examine new approaches to teaching research methods to students of all levels.

For further information, see Teaching Literary Research under LES Publications and Programs, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/les/>
Proposals must be postmarked or received by email no later than December 31, 2002 and include the following information:

1. Working title of chapter.
2. A one page summary or outline of the contents and approach of the chapter.
3. An explanation of the significance of this chapter / how this chapter differs from what has already been published.
4. Estimated length. (Range: 3,500 to 15,000 words)
5. Publication record of author(s). If the author has no previous publications related to the book's topic, include a statement about the author's qualifications relevant to this chapter.
6. Name, mailing address, e-mail address, phone, and fax numbers of author(s) of this chapter.

Proposals should be submitted to either of the co-editors:

Kathy Johnson
Central Reference Services
225A Love Library
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68588-4100
(402) 472-2553
kjohnsoa@unlnotes.unl.edu

Steven Harris
John C. Hodges Library
1015 Volunteer Blvd.
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Knoxville, TN 37996-1000
(865) 974-8693
harris@aztec.lib.utk.edu

Research Competency Guidelines

Biblio-Notes readers are invited to share and discuss the draft Research Competency Guidelines for Literatures in English with relevant teaching faculty at their institutions. Do faculty see a need for these types of guidelines? Have librarians and faculty implemented these or similar guidelines at their institutions?

Feedback about the Research Competency Guidelines may be posted on LES-L <les-l@ala.org> or sent to Heather Martin <hmartin@uab.edu>. The Guidelines are printed below and are available on the Web at <<http://www.ala.org/acrl/les/rescomp.html>>.

Research Competency Guidelines for Literatures in English

Purpose of the Guidelines

- To aid students of literatures in English in the development of thorough and productive research skills
- To encourage the development of a common language for librarians, faculty, and students involved with research related to literatures in English
- To encourage librarian and faculty collaboration in the teaching of research methods to students of literatures in English

- To aid librarians and faculty in the development of research methods courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels

Because teaching methods, course content, and undergraduate requirements vary by institution, librarians and faculty may apply these guidelines in different ways to meet the needs of their students. For guidelines on helping students develop general research skills, librarians and faculty may refer to the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilcomstan.html>.

Outcomes for Undergraduate English or American Literature Majors

(Original list compiled by Anne Jordan-Baker, Elmhurst College)

Understand the structure of information within the field of literary research:

- Differentiate between primary and secondary sources and use each appropriately
- Understand that literary scholarship is produced and disseminated in a variety of formats, including monographs, journal articles, conference proceedings, dissertations, reference sources and websites
- Learn the significant features (e.g., series title, volume number, imprint) of different kinds of documents (e.g., journal articles, monographs, essays from edited collections) before beginning research or attempting to apply citation style formats
- Differentiate between reviews of literary works and literary criticism
- Understand the concept of peer-reviewed sources of information
- Understand that literary texts exist in a variety of editions, some of which are more authoritative or useful than others
- Understand the process of literary production, from authors' manuscripts through publication in a variety of printed editions and formats and including availability in bookstores, libraries, and the Internet

Identify and use key literary research tools to locate relevant information:

- Effectively use library catalogs to identify relevant holdings at local institutions and print and online catalogs and bibliographic tools to identify holdings at other libraries

- Distinguish among the different types of reference works (e.g., bibliographies of bibliographies, annals, serial bibliographies, abstracts, literary dictionaries) and understand the kind of access to information offered by each
- Identify, locate, evaluate, and use reference information about authors, critics, and theorists
- Use subjective and objective sources such as book reviews and citation indexes to determine the relative importance of an author and/or specific work
- Use reference resources to provide background information and contextual information about social, intellectual, and literary culture
- Understand the range of physical locations in one's local library system and the local retrieval and delivery services available
- Understand the uses of consortia catalogs and services

Plan effective search strategies and modify search strategies as needed:

- Use appropriate commands (such as Boolean operators) for database searches
- Identify broader, narrower, and related terms or concepts when initial searches retrieve few or no results
- Identify and use subject terms from the MLA International Bibliography and other specialized indexes and bibliographies
- Identify and use Library of Congress subject headings for literature and authors

Recognize and make appropriate use of library services in the research process:

- Identify and utilize librarian and reference services in the research process
- Use interlibrary loan and document delivery to acquire materials not available at one's own library
- Use digital resource service centers to read and create literary and critical documents in a variety of digital forms

Understand that some information sources are more authoritative than others and demonstrate critical thinking in the research process:

- Learn the different types of Internet resources (e.g., electronic discussion lists,

websites) and how to evaluate them for relevancy and credibility

- Differentiate between resources provided free on the Internet and other electronic resources

Understand the technical and ethical issues involved in writing research essays:

- Employ the MLA documentation style and document sources ethically
- Understand the relationship between received knowledge and the production of new knowledge in the discipline of literary studies
- Analyze and ethically incorporate the work of others to create new knowledge

Locate information about the literary profession itself:

- Access information about graduate programs, about specialized programs in film study, creative writing, and other related fields, and about workshops and summer study opportunities
- Access information about financial assistance and scholarships available for literary study and related fields
- Access information on careers in literary studies

ACRL Literatures in English Section Ad hoc Committee on Literary Research Competencies

Heather Martin, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Austin Booth, University at Buffalo, SUNY

Charlotte Droll, Wright State University

Louise Greenfield, University of Arizona

Anne Jordan-Baker, Elmhurst Collège

Jeanne Pavy, University of New Orleans

Judy Reynolds, San Jose State University

June 2002

Another Day in the Life

It became clear to me, last March, how important it is for literature bibliographers to remain a part of the vital and dynamic literary culture that includes editors, publishers, authors, and critics. In March, I attended a symposium at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor entitled "Makeup on Empty Space: A Celebration of Anne Waldman," primarily because of my ongoing

project of compiling a bibliography of Waldman's publications. Over the space of two and a half days, the Special Collections department of the University's Hatcher Graduate Library provided the venue for many spirited discussions on various aspects of Waldman's career in writing, editing, publishing, and championing poetry. Given the incredible range of Waldman's achievements, these discussions necessarily concerned themselves with nothing less than the story of American poetry since the late 1960s and the transformative political and spiritual power it can wield.

Waldman may not be one of our best poets, but few people can claim to have done as much for making poetry accessible, and re-infusing it with the power it once was believed to have. She recognizes the importance of libraries to a healthy literary culture; in a conversation I once had with her, she expressed concern that the thousands of hours of recited poetry on audiotape at Naropa University - where she initiated an MFA-granting Poetics School - were either going to perish from decomposition or from flooding. She was overseeing, at the time, a project to make the materials in the Naropa library safe from flood-damage; now she is leading a Naropa initiative to digitize these tapes (many of which contain readings by poets as important as Allen Ginsberg and Robert Creeley) and make them available through the Internet.

This interest in, and appreciation of, the role of libraries is also exemplified by the fact that she allowed the University of Michigan Libraries' Special Collections department to house her archives. Waldman is one of the growing number of contemporary writers (Lewis Warsh, Lyn Hejinian, Marge Piercy) who have made their archives-to-date available through university libraries. The UM Libraries' Special Collections staff have finished cataloging everything in the archive, and this was the occasion for the celebratory symposium.

There were speakers at the symposium who reminisced about working with Waldman at various points through her career, scholars who read papers that illuminated her work with the light of feminism, politics, and performative

aesthetics, people who talked about the effect Waldman has had on the publishing world, and, of course, poets reading poetry. All of these events had a profound impact on me not only as someone intimately involved with the work of the poet being feted, but as a *literaturé* librarian. Not having been to an MLA conference, I hadn't yet been able to see, professionally, the way that libraries interact with the other elements of the literary world from any other vantage point than that of a librarian among librarians. There was one more aspect to the symposium from which I also benefited: the observers. Among the people that came to hear these papers and extemporaneous reminiscences were other poets, English professors, small press publishers (besides the panelists mentioned below), and those generally interested one way or another in the theme. I met many of these people, and we exchanged our thoughts on many ideas that had been touched on during the symposium. Many of these people, upon learning of my bibliographic project, expressed their pleasure at the idea of that task being taken on, and were eager to offer support, should I need it.

Part of the symposium dealt with alternative press publishing. The main speakers were Ken Mikolowski, co-founder of The Alternative Press which specialized in letterpress broadsides and small books, Steve Clay, owner of the Granary Books publishing company, and Allan Kornblum, who turned the one-man, Iowa based Toothpaste Press into the formidable and highly respected Coffee House Press. Mikolowski spoke of the freedom that poets found through use of the mimeograph machine. Do-it-yourself publishing for marginalized poets was never more possible than in the mid-1960s, when these machines became available. Clay talked about the trials and tribulations of publishing high quality books that combine literature with visual art and turning a profit. Kornblum, whose publishing company, in contrast to Clay's, is non-profit, imagined a new publishing structure where writers, editors, and publishers existed in harmony. He also described the evolution of his Coffee House Press from its nascent period in the mid-1980s to the successful enterprise that it has become.

Coffee House Press authors were everywhere at the symposium. In addition to Waldman herself, poet Ron Padgett gave a reading and talked about his days in the second "New York school" of poetry with Ted Berrigan, and how a young Anne Waldman came on the scene to run the poetry reading series at St. Mark's Church in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Andrei Codrescu, noted NPR commentator, delivered the keynote address, talking about his immigration into the U.S. and quest to find the heart of the NY poetry scene. When someone told him that he should show his poetry to Anne Waldman, he mistakenly heard: "Walt Whitman." Padgett similarly had plenty of anecdotes from that time, and stole the show with his modest, Irish, sincere, and very funny presentations as a panelist and as a poet.

In some ways, the poetry readings, which happened at night, were the most enlightening parts of the symposium. The diversity of the poets reflected the multifaceted nature of contemporary American poetry (and it was interesting to see how they all related directly to Waldman, and through her, to poetry as something more than performative, and that is published, and collected by libraries). Many of the poets who read, such as Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Joanne Kyger, and Mei-meï Bersenbrugge, have academic credibility, while other up and coming poets like Eleni Sikelianos, are on the verge of attaining that level.

Some other up and coming poets and writers performed during the daytime panel discussions. Jená Osman, author of the award-winning book of poems *The Character*, gave a fascinating multimedia presentation on Waldman's work with dancers and musicians, and prize-winning young poet Laura Bardwell discussed the Buddhist influence on Waldman's work.

It is not an overstatement to say that this symposium gave me an utterly new perspective on my role as a literature librarian. For three days I forgot (almost completely) about electronic databases, OPACs, and the reference desk. I was able to meet, interact with, and learn from, some of the poets whose work I regularly collect for my library, some of the publishers who make these books available, and some of the scholars that regularly make use of

these books (as well as electronic databases) and the libraries that own them. I now tend to think less in terms of publishers' catalogs and review slips, and more in terms of the human face of the body of literature with which we all work. I came to the symposium intent on gleaning more information that would assist me in the compilation of my bibliography, and left a changed, and charged, librarian. I wholeheartedly encourage literature librarians to attend seminars and symposiums that take them out of the normal professional library conference scenario, and allow them to see and meet the people that are involved in creating what they collect, and, perhaps most importantly, to let them see the librarian as someone interested in what they are doing outside of the traditional library context.

Dan Coffey,
Iowa State University
dcoffey@iastate.edu

Entire Backfile of BiblioNotes Now Available Online

All back issues of *BiblioNotes*, (1983-date), may now be viewed on the Literatures in English website.
<<http://www.ala.org/acrl/les/bibnotes.html>>
will take you directly to the list of back issues.

Many thanks to Scott Stebelman, founder and long-time member of LES, for providing the complete paper backfile. And, many thanks to staff at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries for encoding issues 1 through 24 in HTML. Barbara Turner, Clerical Assistant III encoded; Brian Pytlík Zillig, Assistant Professor, helped with the images of Twain and Shakespeare. LES member Kathy Johnson oversaw the project and also encoded. Thanks also to LES web editor Jen Stevens, Washington State University, who added the files to the LES web site.

LES General Membership Meeting

The LES General Membership Meeting will be held from 2-4 pm on Saturday,

January 25th. Location TBA. The first hour will be devoted to a discussion session about African literature in English and postcolonialism. We will discuss strategies for collecting as well as tools for finding primary and secondary sources for study.

Attendees should plan to read David Murdoch's bibliographic essay, "The Riches of Empire: Postcolonialism in Literature and Criticism" before the meeting if possible. It was published in *Choice*, v. 32 (Mar. '95), p. 1059-7.

We strongly encourage anyone interested in learning about this topic or joining in the discussion to attend. We are hoping to have a lively and informative meeting.

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Editor: Julie Still
Paul Robeson Library
Rutgers University
300 N. 4th St. / P. O. Box 23990
Camden, NJ 08101-3990
856 225-6033 ext. 22
still@camden.rutgers.edu

Assistant Editor: Katharine Dean
Ohio State University Libraries
Information Services Department
Main Library, Room 126
1858 Neil Ave.
Columbus, OH 43210
ph. 614.688.5861
dean.202@osu.edu

Quotable Quotes:

"May my eternal repose be unmolested by wayward librarians turned necromancer."
Caroline Stevermer. *When the King Comes Home*

Chair, 2001-2002: Michaelyn Burnette
University of California, Berkeley
390 Library Annex
Berkeley, CA 94720
510-643-1586
mburnett@library.berkeley.edu

Vice Chair, 2001-2002: Steven Harris
John C. Hodges Library
1015 Volunteer Blvd.
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Knoxville, TN 37996-1000
(865) 974-8693
harris@aztec.lib.utk.edu

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