



Making Waves in English

Newsletter for the Department of English
University of Southern California

Chair: Joseph A. Boone

Graduate Studies: Fall, Margaret Russett;
Spring, Bruce Smith

Undergraduate Studies: Viet Nguyen

Literature and Creative Writing Ph.D.: David St. John

Admissions: John Carlos Rowe

Placement: Rebecca Lemon

ISSUE 3, NUMBER 1

USC College
OF LETTERS, ARTS SCIENCES

FALL-WINTER 2005-6

ACADEMIC PLACEMENTS AT ALL-TIME HIGH

2005 was a stellar year for academic placement in English at USC: nine students received jobs, seven of them tenure-track positions.

Taking the cake was **Chris Abani**, the first graduate of the PhD track in literature and creative writing (2005). He has accepted an Associate Professorship with tenure in the Creative Writing Program at UC, Riverside: no tenure-track worries for Chris! **Jinny Huh** led the pack in number of offers. Once she decided on University of Vermont, Huh learned that she had also received a Postdoctoral Fellowship at UCLA for the current year—so she won't be heading off to the ski slopes of Vermont until this coming fall.

Cynthia Sarver, a modernist, also had her choice of offers, and opted for SUNY Cortland, where she is close neighbors with **Elizabeth Bleicher**, a Victorianist who nabbed a position at Ithaca College. Coleridge scholar **Onita Vaz-Hooper** was so thrilled with her campus visit to (and subsequent offer from) Davidson College that she declined three other campus visit invitations.

Vidhu Aggarwal made good with a position teaching literature and creative writing at Rollins College in Virginia, as did **Michael Miklos** teaching ethnic literatures and composition at Los Angeles City College. **Frank Mabee** was delighted to receive a renewable lectureship from his alma mater, University of Tennessee, where he'll be teaching Romanticism and literature. And Victorianist **Molly Engelhardt** had her visiting assistant professorship at **Texas A&M, Corpus Christi** renewed a second year.

There's nothing quite like assuming an academic position after decades of living as a student. Snow-bound **Cindy Sarver** notes, "I don't feel capable of conveying how absolutely happy I am here—I'm just waiting for the other shoe to drop, but it never does! I'm loving my job, my students, my colleagues, the clean air, the seasons, the snow!! (6 inches just this weekend!), the lower cost of living, and the slower pace of life. It feels too good to be true. Of course, I miss LA for all the wonderful people I left behind, but that's really about it (except for Trader Joe's—still going through withdrawal). The biggest adjustment so far has been figur-

ing out my position in the administrative and bureaucratic scheme of things. . . there are so many layers that I felt free to ignore as a grad student. Now, navigating the political waters seems imperative to my survival."

From North Carolina, **Onita Vaz-Hooper** writes about students who seem almost too ideally motivated to be true: "I had very high expectations of Davidson students, and I have to say that my students live up to those expectations." She cites an undergraduate seminar on Robert Browning that she's glad she designed as a graduate-level course since "the students would have been utterly bored if I had aimed any lower." In her undergraduate survey, students delighted at the syllabus's juxtaposition of *Paradise Lost* and *The Country Wife*—Assistant Professor Emily Anderson's suggestion—and of *Wuthering Heights* and Browning's "My Last Duchess" and "Porphyria's Lover": "Didn't that make for some eye-opening discussions about obsession and rationality! A couple of weeks ago, one of the survey students (a Biology major) suggested we get together for tea (we were in the middle of *The Importance of Being Ernest*) and read our favourite poems—we did, and we even ate cake (Gwendolen would not approve)."



Michael Miklos reports from across town that although "the culture at LA City College is different from USC's, my colleagues have eased my transition by being extremely welcoming and by encouraging me to make contributions to the department's culture instead of merely adapting to it. Undoubtedly, that has been the best part of this position, and it has helped me feel like I fit in with my colleagues. I now see that personalities are a HUGE part of landing a job and making the faculty experience a pleasant one."

THE CONTINUING “AFTERLIFE” OF CHARLES DICKENS

This summer, USC faculty, grad students, and alumni convened at UC Santa Cruz for the 25th anniversary of the Dickens Project. This year’s lectures and seminars focused on *Little Dorrit*. The weekend conference, organized by **Hilary Schor** and other Dickens Project faculty with the support of **Erika Wright**, was called “Charles Dickens: Life and Afterlife.”

Both of our faculty representatives were invited to teach seminars again this year: **Hilary Schor** team-taught a graduate student seminar and **Jim Kincaid** taught an undergraduate seminar. **Ned Schantz**, recent USC alum, team-taught an informative graduate student professionalization seminar about the job market. **Nora Gilbert** worked with graduate students from other schools to team-teach discussion sections on *Little Dorrit*. **Kathy Strong** worked with participants to help facilitate lunchtime discussions based on issues raised in the morning lectures and discussion sections.

Speaking of morning lectures . . . **Jim Kincaid** woke up the audience with his captivating talk, “How come only Arthur and Amy Get Blessed?”. **Erika Wright**, one of five graduate students chosen to speak about her dissertation, gave an insightful and well-delivered paper on “Jane Austen’s Invalids: The Problem with Prevention.” USC was also well represented on the evening panel discussions, which were designed to bring together different generations of scholars. **Hilary Schor** participated in the “Dickens and Me” panel while **Ned Schantz** participated in the panel on “Dickens and Genre/Form.”

In a hilarious spoof of the Dickens Project faculty, “Little Dorrit’s Honeymoon: a play without a play,” **Hilary Schor** entertained the crowd by playing “Hilary.” And, as one of two Dickens Project Cruise Directors, I helped coordinate various events and entertainments throughout the week. With the help of nightly Dickens-Themed parties and drinks, I managed to keep over 40 graduate students in good spirits, figuratively as well as literally--indeed, one night we made “Fanny’s Heirloom Old-Fashioneds” in honor of **Michael Blackie**, another USC Dickens Project alum!

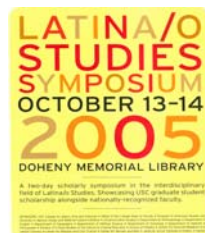
Contributed by
Alice White



Alice White and Kathy Strong at one of the Dickens-themed Parties. They are proudly wearing the Turkish shawls that **Ruth Blandon** brought them back from Istanbul.

USC HOSTS FIRST WEST COAST LATINO/LATINA STUDIES SYMPOSIUM

October 13-14, 2005 USC hosted what may well be the first Latino/Latina Studies Symposium on the West Coast to integrate graduate student scholarship with the research of nationally recognized figures in the field. The symposium brought together scholars from multiple disciplines, including English, Political Science, Cinema, American Studies and Ethnicity, and Sociology.



The Latino/Latina Studies Symposium grew out of an academic professionalization grant that USC College awarded to **Jesus Hernandez** and myself. Professor **David Román** sponsored the project and provided the leadership necessary to make an event of this magnitude possible. The organizing committee also expanded to include graduate students **Priscilla Ovalle** (Cinema), **Jillian Medeiros** (Political Science), and **Sarah Stohlman** (Sociology).

During the event, participants and audience paid tribute to English Professor **Teresa McKenna** for her prolonged commitment to issues of diversity and community building at USC. Amid thunderous applause, graduate student **Araceli Esparza** presented her with a bouquet of roses and a very warm embrace. For those of us working with Professor McKenna it was a very important moment, recognizing the vision of a scholar who has selflessly worked to set the foundation for the emergence of Latino/Latina Studies at USC.

Given that the Latino/Latina Studies Symposium was an interdisciplinary event, we invited the participation of scholars from a wide range of departments and universities. I particularly want to recognize professors here at USC who presented their work: **Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotello** (Sociology), **Roberto Lint Sagarena** (Religion and American Studies & Ethnicity), **Macarena Gomez-Barris** (Sociology and American Studies & Ethnicity), **Harry Pachon** (Public Policy), **Ricardo Rairez** (Political Science), and **Oliver Mayer** (Theatre). This interdisciplinary approach allowed graduate students like myself to benefit from a more inclusive exchange of ideas concerning a pan-ethnic Latino perspective.

The event ended with an evening of performances arranged by playwright **Oliver Mayer**, who had actors read from his plays *Blade of Heat*, *The Young Valiant* and the forthcoming *Hurt Business*. The performances were great, and the food (tamales and seasoned vegetables) were outrageously tasty. Overall the symposium was quite a success. The event required a tremendous amount of labor, but I will always consider working with the other four graduate students and with **David Román** a graduate career highlight.

Contributed by
William “Memo” Arce

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

ENGLISH GRADUATE CLASS OF 2005

Twelve new graduate students showed up in Taper Hall late this August, ready to embark on their PhD careers in English at USC. We welcome them to our department, and salute out-going Admissions Director, **David Rollo**, on the superlative job he did in bringing such outstanding students our way!

Natasha Alvandi, born and raised in Texas, is happy finally to live in a place that agrees with her political inclinations. A Victorianist, she is particularly interested in sensation and gothic novels; among her favorite authors are Jane Austen, Wilkie Collins, Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens, Edith Wharton, and L.M. Montgomery. When not reading, she can be found co-writing an online comic book, reading manga, playing card and video games, watching *Lost* or *Alias* ("It's about an English grad student living in LA who doubles as a spy—I ask you, what could be more relevant to our lives?!").

Jennifer Barager has arrived in LA from Brooklyn, returning to the west coast where she grew up (in Oregon). She took her undergraduate degree at Swarthmore, then worked in NYC in the publishing business and in a university library. "Along the way I tried my hand at fiction writing but decided my stories were more interesting to write than read." Her academic interests include 20th-century US literature, film, and media, and gender and queer studies. "If anyone loves the film *Safe* by Todd Haynes as much as I do, let me know: we might be twins!"

Jillian Burcar graduated in English from U Maryland and has been admitted to the PhD in Literature and Creative Writing track for her work in fiction. She is fascinated by fin de siecle writing, nineteenth-century monsters, and creative nonfiction, especially memoirs. She notes that "although I am madly in love with my husband, he understands my longstanding love affairs with Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Bram Stoker."

Bonnie Hadzam is a fiction writer and enrolled in the Literature and Creative Writing track. She grew up in Cleveland, OH, and went to Carleton College in Minnesota.

Jonathan Hamrick is from Texas, is attracted to Ludwig Wittgenstein, and enjoys a variety of "good (which means sincere) novels, poems, and paintings." He values the rigor of precise and original artistic work.

Shana Kessel hails from Virginia Beach, and she earned her BA in Literary Theory and Comparative/Ethnic Literatures from the University of Virginia, where she also earned her Masters. She is interested in Derrida and Cixous; reworking trauma theory; queer theory; questions of testimony, archive, and witness; and Holocaust literature. She reports that, so far, "living in LA is like studying abroad . . . everything's an adventure here!"

Brett Myhren has lived in Southern California for most of his life, though he recently spent three years in Louisiana and just returned from living and teaching in Mexico. Prior to graduate study, Brett worked in the music industry until "I came to my senses and eagerly returned to school for my M.F.A. and M.A. in poetry. I'm interested in both Los Angeles and California (including Baja California) as literary regions, and spend far too much time amassing useless trivia about them."

Stephen Park earned an MA at the University of Chicago, where he worked on recent poetry, particularly that of Michael Palmer. He is interested in studying the ways in which war-time political climates (such as the Vietnam era and current Iraqi involvements), and the rhetoric that accompanies these, reshape poets' attitudes toward language and their approach to their own work.

Nicky Schildkraut is a poet who moved to LA from New Mexico, where she was teaching composition. She originally hails from Boston. Her scholarly interests include Asian American writers and contemporary poetry.

Marie Smart comes to USC from San Francisco, where she worked for the Academy of Art University for nearly five years. She is originally from Maine, and lived on the east coast her entire life until her college graduation. She completed her undergraduate education at Harvard University with a BA in English.

Adrienne Walser took her undergraduate degree in Art History, Studio Art, and English at the U of Arizona in Tucson. Her interests include popular culture, modernism, aesthetically-pleasing objects, memory, film, gender theory, post-structuralist theory, good shoes, beginning and maintaining friendships, the French New Wave, asking questions, and tragic novels. "When I was eight I won the award of Entertainer of the Year Runner-Up for a dance/gymnastic routine . . . I'm having fun getting to know LA but I'm still trying to figure out my LA look."

FEATURING OUR FACULTY: BROWNBAG LUNCHES SEASON II

Thanks to **Emily Anderson** for once again organizing our series of faculty presentations over lunch. All these gatherings will occur from 12:30-1:30pm, in the Ide Commons Room, Taper 420.

Tuesday, Feb. 28th: CARLA KAPLAN

Tuesday, March 21st: VIET NGUYEN

Monday, April 10th: ALICE GAMBRELL



RECENT AND FORTHCOMING FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Paul Alkon, *Winston Churchill's Imagination* (forthcoming, Bucknell UP 2006).

Emily Anderson, "Staged Insensibility in Burney's *Cecilia*, *Camilla*, and *The Wanderer*. How a Playwright Writes Novels." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 17:4 (Jul. 2005).

Molly Bendall, *Incantation: Poems* (Letter Press Limited Edition, with etchings by John O'Brien, Vero Press, Fall 2005).

Aimee Bender, *Willful Creatures: A Novel* (Doubleday 2005). **Just released!**
 _____, stories and essays in three anthologies: *The Secret Society of Demolition Writers* (Spring 2005), *The Modern Jewish Girl's Guide to Guilt* (Aug. 2005), and *Women on the Edge* (Sept. 2005).

T.C. Boyle, *Tooth and Claw and Other Stories* (Viking 2005). **Just released!**
 _____, *The Human Fly and Other Stories* (Viking, 2005). **Just released!**
 _____, *The Inner Circle* (Penguin paper ed., 2005).

Leo Braudy, *On the Waterfront*, British Film Institute and the University of California Press (2005). **Just released!**

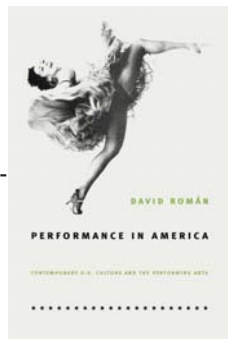
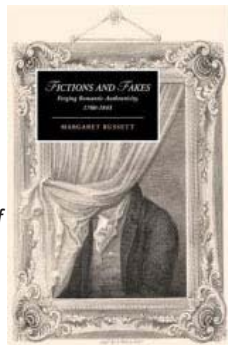
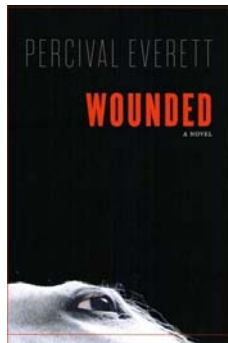
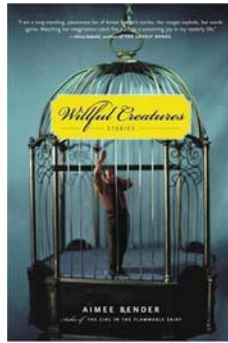
Percival Everett, *Damned if I Do* (Graywolf Press 2005).
 _____, *Wounded* (Graywolf Press 2005). **Just released!**

William Handley, "Belonging(s): Plural Marriage, Gay Marriage, and the Subversion of 'Good Order,'" *Discourse* 26:3 (Fall 2004): 85-109.
 _____, "Detecting the Fictions of History in *Watershed*." *Callaloo* 28: 2 (Spring 2005): 305-12.

Heather James, Co-ed., *The Norton Anthology of Western Literature*, Eighth Edit. (2005).
 _____, "The Poet's Toys: Christopher Marlowe and the Liberties of Erotic Elegy" (forthcoming, *Modern Language Quarterly*).

Jim Kincaid, Editor, Special Issue of *Callaloo* dedicated to the writings of **Percival Everett** Vol. 28, Number 2 (Spring 2005).
 _____, "Collaborating with the Sphinx: On Strom." *Callaloo* 28: 2 (Spring 2005): 369-71.

Rebecca Lemon, "Laws and Arms in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*" in *The Law in Shakespeare* (forthcoming 2006).



David Lloyd, "Afterword: Hardress Cregan's Dream", in Jacqueline Belanger, ed. *The Nineteenth Century Irish Novel* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005).
 _____, "Republics of Difference: Yeats, MacGreevy, Beckett," *Field Day Review*, (2005): 43-70. Abridged version, *Third Text* 19.5 (Sept. 2005): 461-74.
 _____, "Mobile Figures", *Vectors* 2 (2005): www.vectorsjournal.net
 _____, "The Indigent Sublime: Specters of Irish Hunger", (forthcoming *Representations*).
 _____, "The Subaltern in Motion:" *Postcolonial Studies* (in press).

Susan McCabe, Poem in *The Journal* (Spring/Summer 2005).
 _____, Rpt. of critical essay on Alice Notley in *Interim* (Fall 2005).
 _____, 4 Poems in *American Poetry Review* (2006).
 _____, Review/article on Jorie Graham's work in *The Kenyon Review* (2006).

Viet Thanh Nguyen, "What is the Political?: American Culture and the Example of Viet Nam." *Asian American Studies After Critical Mass*, ed. Kent Ono (Blackwell 2004).
 _____, "Marxism After Ho Chi Minh." Rpt. in *Collective Action: A Bad Subjects Anthology*, ed. Megan Shaw Prelinger (Pluto Press 2004).
 _____, Rev. James Kyung-Jin Lee's *Urban Triage*. (forthcoming *Amerasia Journal*)
 _____, *Yellow*, by Don Lee. *Amerasia Journal*. 31.2 (2005): 190-92.

Peter Nickowitz, *Rhetoric and Sexuality: The Poetry of Hart Crane, Elizabeth Bishop, and James Merrill*. (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan 2006). **Just released!**

David Roman, *Performance in America* (Duke UP 2006). **Just released!**

Meg Russett, *Fictions and Fakes: Forging Romantic Authenticity, 1760-1845* (Cambridge UP, 2006). **Just released!**
 _____, "Race Under Erasure," *Callaloo* 28:2 (Spring 2005).

Susan Segal, *Aria*, a novel (Berkeley Books 2003).

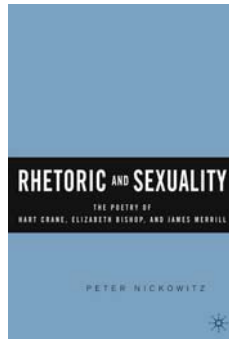
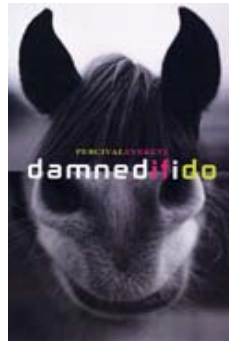
Patty Seyburn, Poems in *The Paris Review*, *RHINO*, 88, *Barrow Street, Antioch*

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

continued from pg. 4 (Seyburn)

Review, Poetry, and forthcoming in three anthologies: *Legitimate Dangers: American Poets of the New Century* (Sarabande Books), *The Eye of the Beholder: A Poets' Gallery*, and *Chance of a Ghost* (Helicon Nine Editions).

- Bruce R. Smith**, "Introduction: Some Pre(sup)positions," *PMLA* 120:1 (Jan. 2005); Special topic issue "On Poetry."
 _____, "Forum: Poetry, Scholarship, and Teaching Composition," *PMLA* 120:3 (May 2005).
 _____, "E/loco/com/motion," *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England*, eds. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (Palgrave-Macmillan 2004).
 _____, "Female Impersonation in Early Modern Ballads," *Performing Women*, ed. Pamela Brown and Peter Parolin (Ashgate 2005).
 _____, "Listening to the Wild Blue Yonder: The Challenges of Acoustic Archeology,"



Hearing Culture, ed. Veil Erbmam (Berg 2004).

- Karen Tongson**, "JJ Chinois' Oriental Express, or How a Suburban Heartthrob Seduced Red American," *Social Text* (Nov. 2005).
 _____, "Metronormativity and Gay Globalization" in *Quer durch die Geisteswissenschaften: Perspektiven der Queer Theory*, eds. Elahe Haschemi Yekani and Beatrice Micahelis (Berlin, Germany: Querverlag 2005).
 _____, "Sexuality in the City," Rev. of *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914* by Matt Cook in *Novel* (Fall 2005).
 _____, "Tickle Me Emo: Lesbian Balladeering, Straight-Boy Emo, and the Politics of Affect *Queering the Popular Pitch*, eds. Sheila Whitely and Jennifer Rycenga, (forthcoming, Routledge 2006).

GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Jennifer Ansley, "Phantasmic Whitman" in *Review* 17/18 (2005): www.micklestreet.rutgers.edu

Elizabeth Binggeli, "Burbanking Bigger and Bette the Bitch" (forthcoming, *African American Review* 2006).

Amaranth Borsuk, poems to be included in an anthology of young Angeleno poets.

Victoria Chang, Poems, *TriQuarterly* (2005).

Ava Chin, "Shelf Life: The Latest Fictions on a Horror Story," *Los Angeles Times* (10 July 2005).
 _____, "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close: Jonathan Safran Foer." *Time Out New York* (Apr. 2005).

Bridget Hoida, "Sugar," a short story, in *Faultline, Journal of the Arts* (Summer 2005).

Katherine Karlin, "Bye-Bye Larry," *Zyzyva* (Spring 2005).
 _____, "The Severac Sound," *Other Voices* (Sum. 2006).
 _____, Over thirty theater reviews published in *Los Angeles Daily News* and syndicated in *U-Entertainment*.

Peter O'Neill, "Frederick Douglass and the Irish." *Foilsiu* [Journal of Irish Studies organization based at NYU] (forthcoming March 2006).

Pamela Schaff, "The Limits of Narrative and Culture: Reflections on Lorrie Moore's 'People Like That are the Only People Here: Canonical Babbling in Peed Onk'" (forthcoming, *Journal of Medical Humanities*).

Samuel Park, has just sold a novel, entitled *Shakespeare's Sonnets* to Alyson Books. It will appear in their 2006-2007 list, and is inspired by Oscar Wilde's *Portrait of Mr. W.H.* Sam reports that "it is part literary fiction, part literary criticism, and it's about two gay Harvard scholars who, à la *Possession*, fall in love while investigating the real-life inspiration for Shakespeare's famous love sonnets."

Jeff Solomon, "Monster and Critic, Teacher and Writer: A Roundtable Discussion by Michelle Latiolais, Vicki Forman, Greg Bills, and Elisabeth Sheffield," *Santa Monica Review* 17:2 (Fall 2005).

Kathryn Strong, Rev. Geoffrey Sill's *The Cure of the Passions and the Origins of the English Novel* (Cambridge UP, 2001) for *The Eighteenth Century: A Current Bibliography* (forthcoming 2006).
 _____, Rev. James M. Smith's *Two Irish National Tales: Castle Rackrent by Maria Edgeworth and The Wild Irish Girl by Sydney Owenson* (Houghton Mifflin 2005) for *Eighteenth Century Novel* (2005).

David Tomkins, Entries on John O'Hara's *Appointment, in Sumarra*, and Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel, The Facts on File Companion to the American Novel*, ed. Western Literature Association by Abby Werlock, (forthcoming 2006).

Alice White, "Connecting Classroom and Community: Service Learning at ONE," *LOUDmouth* (Fall 2005).



FULBRIGHT SPONSORED “CROSSINGS” SUMMER INSTITUTE TAKES USC STUDENTS AND FACUTY TO ISTANBUL

This June, fifteen USC graduate students, staff, and faculty spent two fascinating weeks in Istanbul as participants in the inaugural USC-Bogazici “Crossings” Summer Institute founded and directed by Fulbright alum **Meg Russett**. They were joined by an equal number of their peers from Turkish departments of English and American literature for three concurrent seminars designed as theoretical and practical experiments in cultural exchange. The institute, held on the campus of Bogazici University, was awarded to Russett, a former Fulbright Scholar to Turkey, by a grant from the Fulbright Alumni Initiatives Awards. The goal of this new program is to create institutional links between the home and host universities of former fellows.

The two-week institute culminated a year-long series of sponsored visits to Los Angeles by literary scholars from Bogazici University. In this initial phase of the program, the visiting faculty members gave lectures and conducted research at USC while forming collegial ties with USC faculty members. Two of these visitors, Professors **Ozlem Gorey** and **Ozlem Ogut**, went on to collaborate with USC English faculty in designing team-taught courses for the 2005 summer institute. Tempering American-style multiculturalism with comparative historical perspectives, the three seminars chosen for the institute each represented aspects of the “Crossings” theme. “Orientalist Erotics,” co-taught by **Joe Boone** and **Ozlem Ogut**, traced libidinal currents in fiction, travelogues, and films from antiquity to contemporary Ameri-

can, European, and Turkish writers and artists. “British Romanticism and the Ottoman Empire,” led by **Meg Russett**, focused on works about Turkey by Byron, the Shelleys, and several early British women travelers. Perhaps the biggest surprise was “Latina Writers and Feminist Theory,” proposed by **Ozlem Gorey** and co-taught with **Rebecca Lemon**, which juxtaposed works by contemporary writers like Gloria Anzaldua and Ana Castillo with those of predecessors such as the seventeenth-century missionary Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz.

Arriving armed with 25 pounds each of reading materials for class, USC participants in the institute included **Allyson Salinger** (Comparative Literature), **Flora Ruiz** (Graduate Advisor, Department of English) and nine graduate students from the English Department, representing several nationalities and areas of interest. **Hande Tekdemir**, who received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Bogazici before enrolling at USC, used her seminar work in “Orientalist Erotics” and “British Romanticism and the Ottoman Empire” to begin a dissertation project on English, French, and Turkish representations of Istanbul. **Alice Bardan**, a third-year student from Romania, took all three seminars and still managed to squeeze in a presentation at an international conference. **Jeff Solomon**, researching a dissertation chapter on James Baldwin, interviewed Bogazici University Professor **Kim Fortuny** about Baldwin’s years in Istanbul. Other USC participants included first-year students **Jennifer Ansley**, **Rory Lukins**, and **Katy Karlin**; second- and third-year **Robert Stefanek** and **Michael Robinson**; and dissertators **Ruth Blandon** and **Jennifer Malia**.



Rebecca Lemon and Ozlem Gorey’s seminar celebrates at Awards Banquet

For the USC participants, an essential aspect of the “Crossings” experience was that of meeting, befriending, and taking classes with Turkish students of Anglophone literature and culture. The Bogazici graduate students, many of whom plan further study in Britain or the U.S., lived up to the Turkish reputation for hospitality and party-going by introducing the Americans to the many day, night and pre-dawn attractions and libations of Istanbul. Along with several activities organized by **Meg Russett**, such as a classical music concert on the grounds of Topkapi Palace and an architectural tour led by Bogazici historian **Gunhan Danisman**, a lively extracurricular social scene left some of the USC cohort looking bleary-eyed by the end of the two weeks.

continued on pg. 7

Jennifer Ansley reports that sharing talks and meals with her Turkish colleagues made her think seriously about the global context of knowledge production; **Jeff Solomon** found studying Latina feminism in Turkey initially weird but “wholly persuasive”; **Ruth Blandon** was a 4 a.m. hit in a gay Istanbul nightclub, and found some common ground between the identities of Latina and Turkish women; **Flora Ruiz** spent two nights as the guest of **Hande Tekdemir** and her husband **Baris**. It’s to be hoped that some of the resulting friendships will lead to Ph.D. applications from Bogazici’s talented group of B.A. and M.A. students, continuing the tradition pioneered by Hande. Students from Bogazici were enthusiastic about the possibility of a second “Crossings,” perhaps this time in Los Angeles: with such an auspicious beginning, the department’s new affiliation with Bogazici seems designed for further explorations.



Team teachers **Rebecca Lemon, Joe Boone, and Meg Russett** frolic in the hydrangea between classes.

“ROGUE WAVES”: MASTHEAD FOR THIS ISSUE OF “MAKING WAVES IN ENGLISH”

Sometimes towering to a height of 30 metres, and seemingly coming from nowhere, ‘**rogue waves**’ are genuine monsters of the seas. Over the past 20 years, about 200 vessels of over 200 metres in length have been sunk or damaged by an encounter with these freaks of nature which have claimed the lives of 540 sailors. The multidisciplinary team working on the MaxWave European project is now trying to understand how these waves are formed, to analyse their potential to harm, and to suggest an appropriate warning system.



© Technical University Berlin

europa.eu.int/.../rtdinfo/42/index_en.html

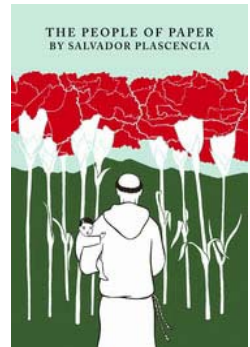
RUTH BLANDON TELLS ALL!

ISTANBUL HIGHLIGHTS

Favorite moments? I will never forget doing my reading for **Joe Boone’s** class (Pierre Loti’s *Aziyade*) in a café in Taksim and then exploring for hours the very streets of Galata I’d just read about. Nor will I forget how spatially and temporally mind-blowing it was, during the Stamboul Music Festival, to listen with my classmates and professors to Italian Baroque music at the Hagia Eirene, a 4th-century Christian church encompassed by Mehmet the Conqueror’s 16th-century Topkapi Palace. Other indelible memories: marathon shopping at the Grand Bazaar with **Allyson Salinger** and then hitting the over-three-century-old Cagaloglu Hamami; mint tea and the nargilehs at the tea gardens; scaling the walls of the Anadolu Kavagi Kalesi (a medieval castle built by the Byzantines) with **Robert Stefane** after **Flora Ruiz, Jeff Solomon, Robert** and I cruised the Bosphorus, sitting atop the castle, seeing the Bosphorus flow out into the Black Sea, and hearing the calls to afternoon prayer go back and forth from the Asian and European sides of Turkey; seeing the relics of John the Baptist and the prophet Mohammed at the Topkapi Palace Treasury; sitting near campus one moonlit night and looking upon the Bosphorus with **Rory Lukins, Robert Stefane**, and **Jeff Solomon** as we told each other our most outrageous and ridiculous stories.

RAVE REVIEWS FOR SAL PLASCENCIA’S FIRST NOVEL

Ph.D. student **Salvador Plascencia’s** first novel, *The People of Paper*, has been published by McSweeney’s Publishing. It is the story of a Mexican man and his daughter who travel to Los Angeles, where, “with the aid of a local street gang and the prophetic powers of a baby Nostradamus, they engage in an epic battle to find a cure for sadness,” according to McSweeney’s website.



The *San Francisco Chronicle* calls the novel “by turns fiction, symbolic autobiography and historical nonfiction. . . . But finally, beyond all the experimental devices, fairy-tale antics and fabulist inclination, Plascencia’s novel is a story of lost love.” The book has received rave reviews from publications across the country. It is an *Entertainment Weekly* and *San Francisco Chronicle* Editor’s Choice. Author George Saunders calls the novel a “stunning debut by a once-in-a-generation talent.” Although Sal was reported in the press as saying, “Maybe I’m done with school,” he assures *Making Waves in English* that despite the wonderful reception of his novel, he has no official plans to interrupt his doctoral studies. The paperback is being published by Harcourt. Hebrew, Spanish and Italian language editions are forthcoming in 2006 and 2007.

RECENT CONFERENCES, PAPERS, READINGS

- Paul Alkon**, Churchill Centre conference in England and Normandy commemorating the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings (Sept. 2004).
_____, Annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Mar. 2005).
_____, Eaton Conference on science fiction at the Seattle Science Fiction Museum (May 2005).
- Emily Anderson**, Panel Organizer and Chair, "Self-Justifying Fictions: Novels and the Anti-Novel Debate" and "Pedagogical Performance: Maria Edgeworth's Didactic Approach to Fiction." American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Mar. 2005).
_____, "Teaching the Teaching in Aphra Behn's *Orronoko*," at "Still Kissing the Rod": Early Modern Woman Writers Conference (Oxford July 2005).
_____, "Staging the Passions: Female Self-Expression in Eighteenth Century Narrative and Performance." Performativity in 18th Century Theater Panel. MLA (Dec. 2005).
- Jennifer Ansley**, "Phantasmic Whitman," Whitman and Place, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ (April 2005).
- Alice Bardan**, "Code Unknown or What You Will: Looking Awry at Haneke's Real," "Cinema In Europe: Networks in Progress" Conference at the University of Amsterdam (June 23-25, 2005).
_____, "Good-Bye, Lenin and Nostalgia for The Communist Past," USC AEGS Interdisciplinary Conference (March 2005).
_____, Panel chair, "West of Hollywood: Film, Forgetting, and Flashbacks," "Cultures of Memory and Forgetting in the American West," Western Literature Association, Los Angeles (Oct. 2005).
- Aimee Bender**, Teacher at the Tin House Writers' Conference (July 2005) and one of four writers reading and speaking at the Emerging Writers' Conference at the University of Cincinnati (Oct. 2005).
- Ruth Blandon**, "Transnationalism and Protest in the Literatures of James Weldon Johnson, Jessie Redmon Fauset, Nella Larsen, and Langston Hughes," PAMLA in Malibu, CA (Nov. 2005).
- Amaranth Borsuk**, "Waves on Nets: Reading the V into Stephanie Strickland's *Vniverse*," conference at (dis)junctions 2005, "Theory Reloaded," UC Riverside (Apr. 2005).
- Leo Braudy**, "In the War Zone: How Does Gender Matter?," Radcliffe Institute (Nov. 2005).
- T.C. Boyle**, Reading with **David Bezmogis** at *The New Yorker* Festival (Sept. 2005).
- Judith Jackson Fossett**, Participant, "Citizenship and U.S. Writing: Perspectives from the American Literature Divisions." MLA (Dec. 2005).
- Alice Gambrell**, "The Stolen Time Archive." New Technologies of Literary Investigation Panel. MLA (Dec. 2005).
- Pamela Grieman**, "Rites of Passing: Postmodern Ritual in *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*," Midwest MLA, Milwaukee, WI (Nov. 2005).
_____, Moderator, "Praxis in Native American Performance." MLA (Dec. 2005).
- Judith Halberstam**, "The Politics of Negativity in Recent Queer Theory." MLA (Dec. 2005).
- William Handley**, "Just Friends: The Unelected Affinities Between Modernism and Anti-Modernism," Conference of the Modernist Studies Association. Vancouver (Oct. 2004).
_____, "Authentic Extras: Playing Indian and Performing American in *The Vanishing American*," Conference of the Western Literature Association. Big Sky, Montana (Oct. 2004).
_____, "The Achievement of Joan Didion." Conference of the Western Literature Association. Los Angeles (Oct. 2005).
- Lucia Hodgson**, "Beneath Him Sees the Universal Whole": Phillis Wheatley's Reconstruction of the Child's Perspective," MLA, Washington, DC (Dec. 2005).
_____, "John Locke in the New World and in American Children's Studies," MLA, Washington, DC (Dec. 2005).
- Bridget Hoida**, "The California Palimpsest: Unfolding the Papered People of Raymond Barrio and Salvador Plascencia," Western Literature Association, Los Angeles (Oct. 2005).
_____, "Plotting the Geographic Imaginary: Chicano Nostalgic Impulse in the California Novel," PAMLA (Nov. 2005).
- Heather James**, "Spenser and the Pagan Gods," St. Andrews, Scotland (Apr. 2005).
_____, "Transformations of Faith," Clark Library (Oct. 2005).
_____, "Ovid on the Margins," Keynote Speaker, PAMLA (Nov. 2005).
- Katherine Karlin**, Paper on Chester Himes's novel, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, Conference on Working-Class Fiction, hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Popular Culture Association, Rutgers University (Nov. 2005).

Jim Kincaid, Dickens Conference (Aug. 2005).

_____, Keynote speaker at VISAWUS conference in Albuquerque (Oct. 2005).

Rebecca Lemon, Co-sponsor with **Peter Mancall**, Addiction: Conference at The Huntington (upcoming May 13, 2006). An interdisciplinary look at the topic of addiction, drawing scholars of literature, history, biology, and psychology. For more information, please contact rlemon@usc.edu.

David Lloyd, Cork Poetry Festival (July 2005), Nationalism and Culture, Estonia (Aug. 2005).

_____, Three lectures: "Beckett and the Writing of Extremity." Notre Dame Graduate Summer School, (Dublin, Jul. 2005).

Jennifer Malia, "An Unladylike Vocation: Depictions of Women Terrorists in Irish and Russian Literature, 1871-1933," 6th Annual Association of Pacific Rim Universities Doctoral Student Conference, Eugene, OR (Aug. 2005).

Susan McCabe, "Bryher's Close Up and World War I Shock", Modernist Studies Association, Chicago (Nov. 2005).

_____, "New Perspectives on Gender, Sexuality and Literature," PAMLA, Pepperdine U (Nov. 2005).

Marci McMahon, "Neoliberalism and the Domestic Sphere: Diane Rodriguez's Direction of Migdalia Cruz's 'The Have-Little,'" ASA, Washington DC (Nov. 2005).

Viet Thanh Nguyen, "Opening Up Complexity: Literature and Multimedia," Visible Knowledge Project Conference, Washington D.C. (Sept. 2005).

_____, "Found in Translation," Association for Asian American Studies Conference, LA (Apr. 2005).

_____, Fiction readings at Temple University, PA (Apr. 2005) and at the Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA (Jan. 2005).

Peter Nickowitz, "The Alice Complex" and "Backgammon at the Louvre." Workshop production. Dir. Bill Oliver. With Harriet Sansom Harris, Kate Mara, Sue Cremin, and Nike Doukas. The Living Room Series at The Blank Theater, Hollywood, CA (Jan. 2006).

Peter O'Neill, "Ships that Passed in the Night: Frederick Douglass and the Irish," the 7th Annual GRAIN Conference at NYU (Mar. 2004).

Marjorie Perloff, "'The Renaissance of 1910': History and Geography in Guy Davenport's Poetics." MLA (Dec. 2005).

David Román, "A Streetcar Named Deseo," Performing the Impossible Panel, MLA (Dec. 2005).

Meg Russett, "Deviating Into Blasphemy," North American Society for the Study of Romanticism, Montreal (Aug. 2005).

_____, "Real Lives of Unreal People." Keynote Address, Conference on Autobiography and Life-Writing, Haliç University, Istanbul (Spring 2006).

Pamela Schaff, Invited Plenary Speaker, Western Group on Educational Affairs Association Of American Medical Colleges (Apr. 2005).

_____, "Donning the White Coat: The Narrative Threads of Professional Development." Conference on "The Many Faces of Narrative: Research and Stories of our Patients, Students and Teachers."

Bruce Smith, "E/loco/com/motion,": Shakespeare Association of America, Bermuda (Mar. 2005).

_____, "Shakespeare and Gender: Matter, Mind, and Imagination," Renaissance Society of America, Cambridge UK (Apr. 2005).

_____, "The Curtain between the Theatre and The Globe," Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association, Jackson Hole, WY (June 2005).

Jeff Solomon, "Daguerrotypes and Dykes: Author Photos of Whitman and Stein." Gay and Lesbian Studies Panel, PAMLA (2005).

_____, "Homosexuality Has No Humanist Value: Truman Capote and the Trillings," NEMLA, Philadelphia, PA (Mar. 2006).

Kathryn Strong, "Frances Burney and Well-Dressed Visions of Propriety." Dickens Project Annual Winter Conference. UCLA (Feb. 2006).

_____, Roundtable Participant, "On *Regency House Party*." Parties: Annual English Department Graduate Student Conference, USC (Apr. 2005).

_____, "The Force of Feminine Fictions: Sartorial Narrative in Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina*." Annual Conference, American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, Las Vegas NV (Mar. 2005).

_____, "'The dreadful apparel of awful reality: Fashioning a Self in Burney's *The Wanderer*." Annual Conference, South Central Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, St. Simons Island, GA (Feb. 2005).

David Tomkins, "Modernism and its Materialisms," Seminar Participant. Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Chicago (Nov. 2005).

_____, "On the Solid Earth: Myth, Materialism, and the Appropriation of Origins in Willa Cather's *The Professor's House*." North Eastern MLA Convention. Pittsburg, PA (Mar. 2004).

Karen Tongson, "Queer Provincialisms: A Conversation with Lynne Chan," Beyond the Strai(gh)ts: Transnationalism and Queer Chinese Politics, UC Berkeley (Apr. 2005).

_____, "Keyword: Area," Keyword Series, Women and Gender Studies, UC Irvine (Apr. 2005).

STUDENTS AND FACULTY WIN RECOGNITION

Paul Alkon continues to serve on the Board of Academic Advisors of the Churchill Centre (International Churchill Societies) and he has been nominated to serve another three-year term.

Emily Anderson received a Mellon Match Fellowship in August 2005; a British Academy/Huntington Library Travel Grant, July 2005; and an Early Modern Studies Institute Faculty Fellowship, Fall 2005.

Emily was also named winner of the College Teaching Award for General Education for 2004-5 and received her prize at the December College holiday party.

William "Memo" Arce and **Jennifer Kwon Dobbs** were featured in a *Los Angeles Times* story about the USC initiative Write On! SummerTIME ("Boost for College Bound" by Stuart Silverstein, 7/29/05). Memo and Jennifer were the two writing instructors for this USC summer program designed to help talented but socially disadvantaged students succeed in college.

Aimee Bender received a Pushcart Prize for her story "End of the Line." Her story, "Tiger Mending," is included in the 2005 edition of *Best American Non-Required Reading*.

Joseph Boone received a Senior Zumberge Research Grant (deferred to 2006-7) for his book project, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*.

Leo Braudy was named as the presenter of the History prize at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books in April 2006.

Nora Gilbert received the 2005-6 USC Center for Law, History and Culture Graduate Student Fellowship.

Bridget Hoida received the honored Service Award from the Office of Residential Education for her involvement in the student mentor program.

Mark Irwin received the 2005 Colorado Book Award in Poetry for *Bright Hunger*.

Heather James is the recipient of American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship (2005-6), the NEH Long-Term Fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library (2005-6), Long-Term Fellowship at the Huntington Library (declined) and the Beinecke Library Fellowship (2005).

Rebecca Lemon has been elected to the program committee of the Shakespeare Association of America. As part of the four-person committee, Rebecca will help design the program for the annual meeting in 2007, to be held in San Diego, CA.

Susan McCabe was a Beinecke Fellow at Yale for October 2005, and she will also be researching/lecturing at the University of Lund as a Fulbright Fellow in Spring 2006.

Viet Thanh Nguyen's unpublished short story "In the Dark" was adapted for the stage by Duy Nguyen (no relation) and read at the John Sims Center's Work-in-Progress Series, San Francisco, July 2005. A stage production at the Sims Center occurred on Nov. 4-5, 11-12, 2005.

David Román was recently appointed USC College Director of Faculty Development for a three-year term. This new position involves three key roles: mentoring assistant professors, diversifying the faculty, and building intellectual community.

Pamela Schaff received an award for Outstanding Teaching from the Medical School in Professionalism and the Practice of Medicine. She also founded *Synaesthesia*, Journal of Literature and Arts, Keck School of Medicine, and she founded an art gallery at the Health Science Campus, with two shows yearly of faculty and student art.

Bruce Smith was a William Evans Visiting Fellow at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, Aug. 2005.

Kathryn Strong received the Huntington Library Michael J. Connell Foundation Fellowship, Summer 2005.

Alice White received a USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute PhD Fellowship, 2005-6. She also served as a Cruise Director for The Dickens Project, at UC Santa Cruz, in July/August 2005.

CONFERENCES, PAPERS, READINGS

continued from pg. 10 (Tongson)

_____, "Faux-'mo Crooners and the Straight Women Who Love Them," Experience Music Project Pop Music Conference, Seattle (Apr. 2005).

_____, "Hot Red and Blue: Queers and The Electoral Imagery," Consortium for Women and Research and Cultural Studies Program, UC Davis (Mar. 2005).

Alice White, "Regency House Party: A Roundtable."

AEGS Interdisciplinary Conference on Parties/Shared Space, USC (Apr. 2005).

_____, Milwaukee Annual General Meeting of the Jane Austen Society of North America. Conference topic: Jane Austen's Letters in Fact and Fiction (Oct. 2005).

ANOTHER YEAR OF SUCCESSFUL DISSERTATION DEFENSES

The Department's congratulations go out to the most recent crop of dissertation defenders (August, 2004 to September, 2005).

Vidhu Aggarwal, "Undecidable Cases: Investigations into Lyric Modes and Affective Processes"
Chair: James Kincaid
(defended August 27, 2004)

Elizabeth C. Binggeli, "Hollywood Dark Matter: Reading Race and Absence in Studio Era Narrative"
Chairs: Carla Kaplan and Tania Modleski
(defended October 29, 2004)

Michael R. Blackie, "Rest Cures: The Narrative Life of Medical Practice"
Chair: Joseph A. Boone
(defended September 10, 2004)

Michael Frisoli, "The Modernist Undoing of Knowledge: Implications for Student Subjectivity and the Status of Academic Knowledge"
Chair: James Kincaid
(defended November 12, 2004)

Jinny Huh, "The Arresting Eye: Race and the Detection of Deception"
Chair: Teresa McKenna
(defended August 23, 2005)

Ruth M. J. Kwon, "Freak: Bodies and Strategies"
Chair: James Kincaid
(defended May 25, 2005)

Sun Hee Teresa Lee, "Writing/Performing Text and Identity: Self-Reflexivity in Contemporary American Literature"
Chair: David Román
(defended May 31, 2005)

Frank Mabee, "The Pastured Sea: Maritime Radicalism and British Romanticism"
Chairs: Margaret Russett and Joseph A. Boone
(defended September 16, 2005)

James L. Penner, "Pinks, Pansies & Punks: Macho Criticism and American Literary Culture from the Depression to the Sexual Revolution"
Chair: Leo Braudy
(defended July 26, 2005)



Contact us or visit our web site:

PhD in Literature, Fruiz@usc.edu

PhD in Literature and Creative Writing, cwphd@usc.edu

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/english/>

(213) 740-2808; Fax (213) 741-0377

Newsletter Editors:

Joseph A. Boone, Nellie Ayala-Reyes,

Aimee Bender, Lucia Hodgson,

Karen Tongson

TRANS/ITIONS IN AEGS

The AEGS committee members for the academic year 2005-06 are **Jennifer Ansley**, **Jean Neely**, **Mary Ann Davis**, **Amaranth Borsuk**, **Stacy Lettman**, and **Michelle Wilson**.

This year's interdisciplinary graduate student conference, the nineteenth, will bring together students from a variety of disciplines, working in multiple mediums around the topic, "Trans—: Negotiations and Resistance," on April 7-8, 2006. The conference will be co-chaired by **Mary Ann Davis** and **Jennifer Ansley**, with budgeting and financial wizardry by **Michelle Wilson**.

The AEGS committee this year is committed to promoting communication between the students and the faculty. Jean and Jennifer are working on creating opportunities for intellectual and professional conversations both within the department and across the university. **Amaranth Borsuk** has been working diligently on getting the AEGS website back up and running and would love to get feedback on the features and resources that people would like to see. **Stacy Lettman** and **Jean Neely** are at work on the graduate student newsletter.

The Alumni Report

NEWS FROM NEAR AND AFAR

Ami Regier, PhD 1995, now tenured Associate Professor at Bethel College, has recently published an essay on Leslie Marmon Silko, "Revolutionary Enunciatory Spaces: Ghost Dancing, Transatlantic Travel, and Modernist Arson in *Gardens in the Dunes*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 51:1 (Spr. 2005):134-57.

Dean Franco, PhD 2000, an Assistant Professor at Wake Forest University, recently was published in the profession's flagship journal, *PMLA*. The essay is "Working Through the Archive: Trauma and History in Alejandro Morales's *The Rag Doll Plagues*," *PMLA* (March 2005): 375-87.

Linda Mitchell, PhD 1996, has just been given early promotion to full professor of English at San Jose State University. Linda's book on *Grammar Wars* has been widely reviewed in the US and in Europe, and last year the BBC flew her to London for a special program on her book. Her current book on seventeenth-century lexicography is now in press.

Rosemary Weatherston, PhD 1999, was successfully promoted to tenured Associate Professor at University of Detroit, Mercy, in 2005.

Jim Kincaid reports that one of our former undergraduates, **Kellie Dawson** (née Rymes), who got her PhD at Cornell, has recently published an essay in the *Nabokov Quarterly*. We are delighted to have Kellie teaching as an Adjunct in the department this semester.

Rhea MacCallum, English BA 1997, had her play, "A Little Experimenting," performed at the Secret Rose Theatre in Los Angeles, Oct. 21-23, 2005.

“AMERICAN WEST” CONFERENCE A HUGE SUCCESS

As president of the Western Literature Association for 2005, I've been in charge of planning and organizing for two years its 40th annual conference, which took place in L.A. October 19-22 at the downtown Omni hotel on Bunker Hill. “Cultures of Memory and Forgetting in the American West,” a theme suitable to the setting, brought together 375 scholars and writers from 34 states and eight countries, including China, Japan, and the Basque country in Spain. It was among the



Angels Flight, circa 1900, Bunker Hill

association's most well-attended conferences. This was the WLA's first meeting in Southern California and among its most memorable, given the range of topics among the program's 75 panels: from environmentalism to apocalyptic and utopian imaginaries; from Native American and Asian American studies to the overlapping subjects of L.A. and California fiction, film, and photography; from imperial designs in formative popular westerns to Chicano activism during the war in Vietnam; from creative nonfiction on western memory and forgetting to a theatrical reading of “Zane Grey in LA” and a poetic rendering of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton.

Sandra Tsing Loh (the author, performance artist, and NPR personality) opened the conference with a bang and stayed for the reception—and kindly offered anyone attending the conference free admission to her extraordinary one-woman show at the 24th Street theater, “Mother on Fire.” She was followed by **Kevin Starr**, the renowned California historian and University Professor of history at USC, who gave a memorable, wide-ranging, and self-critical keynote address about the value of literature in understanding history, which has been an assumption of his prodigious work. The following day, he joined **William Devereill** in the history department, **Forrest Robinson** (UC Santa Cruz), and **Krista Comer** (Rice) on a plenary history, fiction, and the literary West.

The WLA's Annual Distinguished Achievement Award was given jointly to **Joan Didion** and **Gerald Vizenor**, each of whom is known for accomplishments in fiction and non-fiction. Because of her book tour, Joan Didion could not attend; Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe-Chipewa) addressed the conference and received a standing ovation. Vizenor's work was the subject of a panel and of individual papers, including one by **John Gamber**. John is a Seminole graduate student at

UC Santa Barbara, who won the WLA's prize for the best graduate paper given at the conference and who will soon see a published, extended version of that paper in *PMLA*.



Award winners John Gamber and Stephania LeMenager

English colleagues **T.C. Boyle** and **Percival Everett** read from their work and drew eager audiences. (One panel was devoted to Percival's writing, and included English graduate student **Joshua Smith**.) Other writers who read at the conference were the novelist **Karen Tei Yamashita**, L.A.'s unofficial poet laureate **Wanda Coleman** (below), and English graduate student **Salvador Plascencia**, who “read” (with the help of friends) from his novel *The People of Paper*, which has drawn wide acclaim.

Attendees not only had a chance to enjoy the conference but also to explore Los Angeles. Saturday excursions proved a big draw: to the Southwest Museum of the American Indian and the Museum of the American West; to the LA River with **Jenny Price** as expert guide; to the Getty and to the Huntington; and to Venice Beach. The WLA is a very sociable and supportive association: many graduate students attending for the first time were struck by these qualities—and surprised to see so many academics actually dancing

after the Friday night awards banquet (to a band called “The Beach Toys”: dancing with **Wanda Coleman** and **Christine Bold** to surfer music was an unexpected treat that I won't soon forget).



Wanda Coleman

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our chair **Joe Boone**, our colleague **Marjorie Perloff**, and the College at USC for their financial support, without which we would not have come in under budget. Thanks also to the faculty and graduate students who offered to chair panels and volunteered their time throughout the conference. I especially want to salute graduate students **Wendy Witherspoon** and **Bridget Hoida** for their dedication and time in helping me to pull it all together—including the tote bags and name tags, the program printing and bookkeeping. Several members of the association expressed to me how impressive and extraordinarily helpful they were. Compared to compliments about the hotel, the food, the conference program, etc, those remarks made me feel proudest of all.

Contributed by
Bill Handley