

Loose Canons

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Cover illustration by Barbara Emmons

African American Literary Studies

Renaissance may be too mild a term to describe the dramatic developments in African American literature here at Emory in the past decade. With six outstanding artists and scholars (including three endowed chairs), an expanding suite of graduate and undergraduate courses, talented graduate alumnae/i regularly placed in leading universities, and with Special Collections holdings among the top five collections nationally, Emory's Department of English is now one of the leading sites in the world for the study of African American literature and culture.

One could say that this new era began with the arrival of Frances Smith Foster, Charles Howard Candler Professor of English and Women's Studies. Already the foremost scholar of 19th-century African American literature, her appointment afforded the field the gravity and visibility to build aggressively, resulting in two additional chaired appointments (Yusef Komunyakaa and Michael Awkward) and two spectacularly promising junior appointments (Natasha Trethewey and Lawrence Jackson), while African American Studies and the Woodruff Library lured away Harvard's archivist, Randall Burkett—instrumental in the acquisition of the Hatch-Billops, James Weldon Johnson, Louise Thompson Patterson and Michel Fabre papers.

Although national visibility has been the trend for the field more generally, it's easy to forget how recent this relative success really is. African American literature and criticism date back to the 18th century, yet Frances Smith Foster represents the first generation of scholars accepted by the mainstream of the discipline. Resistance to reading literature in a larger cultural context; resistance to literature with overt political agendas, as well as the widely held belief that African Americans were incapable of writing literature worth noting limited the development of the field. Thus by appointing poets and scholars in three essential areas—creative writing, historical or bibliographical criticism, and theory and cultural criticism—the English Department has established the coverage and balance crucial for the develop



Sanders

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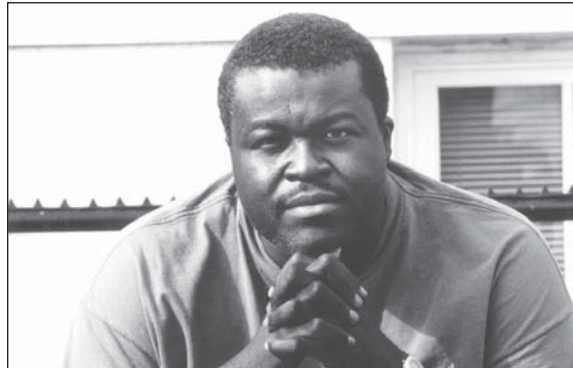
Inside: Komunyakaa Joins Faculty • Richardson's Beloved Children • Jackson, Patterson on Ellison

Beloved's Children

You rememory me?
Yes, I remember you
You never forgot me?
Your face is mine.
Do you forgive me?
Will you stay?
You safe here now.

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

My annual reading of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel has become an exquisite ordeal. And I say "reading" rather than "re-reading" because Morrison has gathered in *Beloved* a wisdom that is prescient, pregnant, and protean—so much so that any expectations and memories from previous readings are always confounded, transformed by a newer and greater splendor that will also be dashed the next time I read this work. For what *Beloved* says about the past, race, memory, desire, and love shimmers on so many levels that I, like Keats upon his experiencing Chapman's translation of Homer, experience a delight be-



Richardson

yond ordinary pleasure, that giddy and breathy delight that comes with discovering something again-for-the-very-first-time. Yet, and perhaps unlike Keats' persona in his sonnet, the pleasure I derive from sojourning in *Beloved's* realm is burdened with sadness, anger, despair, maybe even something approaching madness. And this is what makes the Nobel-laureate's fifth novel quintessentially United Statesian and universally compelling: her excavation of a U.S. past both bitter and necessary; her interrogation of that mythic construct called race and

its concomitant psychoses for all who fall under its pall; her grappling with memory beset with the trauma of *Maafa* (the holocaust of enslaved Africans during the Middle Passage); and her deployment of love as the ultimate "ghostbuster," though love's arrival is never an easy one and its continued presence is never a surety.

Because they, like the beings who people Morrison's novel, are a product of lack, struggle, and vision, I often liken historically black colleges/universities (HBCUs) to architectural Beloveds whose every portal is a mouth crying out for memory and dignity. Such a metaphor becomes especially apparent as HBCUs exist in tandem with and in contradistinction to their white counterparts (HWCUs). Indeed, the antinomies through which *Beloved* unfolds—remembering versus forgetting, slavery versus freedom, recovery versus loss, life versus death, blackness versus whiteness—parallel the binaries that continue to define the post-bellum relationship between HBCUs and HWCUs: the privileged versus the marginalized, segregating versus segregated institutions, state-of-the-art versus state-of-the-heart, whiteness versus blackness. As one who earned a B.A. from an HBCU (Hampton University), then earned an M.A. from an HWCU (Miami University), next taught for two years at another HWCU (Kennesaw State University), then is currently completing his dissertation at still another HWCU (Emory Univer-

Loose Canons

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Photo by Mary Alma Durrett

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GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

- **Rachael Bowser** presented a paper at the Conference of the Group for Early Modern Culture and Society, sponsored by Florida State University, Tampa, Nov. 15-17.
- **Jennefer Callaghan** presented a paper on “The Modernist Poem at Mid-Century America” at the The Modernist Studies Association Fourth Annual Conference, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Oct. 31-Nov.3. She has been named a Dean’s Teaching Fellow at Emory for 2003-04.
- **Ann Campbell** has accepted a tenure-track assistant professorship in 18th century literature at Boise State University in Idaho.
- **Mary Carter** presented a paper, “ ‘The best test is the supernatural’: The Possibilities of Native American Autobiography,” at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Convention in Baltimore, Nov. 15-17.
- **Tara Christie** presented a paper, “ ‘rising to the tick of two clocks’: The Representation of Political Violence in Yeats’s *The Dreaming of the Bones*, and Heaney’s *North*,” at the Central New York Conference for Languages and Literatures held at The State University of New York, Cortland, in October. In February, she delivered a paper entitled “ ‘grinding in order to gleam’: Making the Ordinary the Extraordinary: Seamus Heaney’s *Hardy*,” at the Southern American Conference for Irish Studies held at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga.
- **Kathryn Crowther** presented a paper, “David’s Two Bodies: Relic, Transmission and Linguistic Anxiety in *David Copperfield*,” at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Convention in Baltimore, Nov. 15-17.
- **Brian Croxall** presented a paper, “A Portrait of the Flaneur as a Young Man: Exploring the Role of the Street Detective in (Reading) Joyce’s *Portrait*,” at the Central New York Conference on Language and Literature, sponsored by the State University of New York, Cortland, Oct. 27-29.
- **Tony Cuda** has been commissioned to write three essays for *The Companion to 20th Century American Poetry* series. One is on H.D.’s “Helen in Egypt,” another is on Gertrude Stein’s “Tender Buttons,” and the third is on the category “Narrative Poetry.” *The Companion* will be published in early 2004. He is also one of three graduate students selected to participate in the interdisciplinary Lovis Corinth Research Symposium to be held at Emory in April. Cuda chaired a panel on Italian Medieval Literature and presented an essay in the Modern British Literature panel called “Yeats’s Loosening Masonry,” at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Convention in Baltimore, Nov. 15-17. He has been named a Dean’s Teaching Fellow at Emory for 2003-04.
- **Rosslyn Elliott** presented a paper entitled “Henry James in the House of God’s Fiction” at the Mideast Conference on Christianity and Literature, held Oct. 18 and 19, in Dayton, Ohio.
- **Hans-Georg Erney’s** paper, “Colonialism and Language in Herman Melville’s *Typee*,” was published in the latest edition of the *Periodical for English and American Studies*, and his work, “Indien und Pakistan Aus Der Sicht Des Helden in *Midnight’s Children*,” appeared in the latest edition of *Anglia: Periodical for English Philology*.
- **Erin Goss** presented a paper entitled “Cyborg Poetry and ‘new materials for knowledge’: Shelley’s ‘Defence of Poetry’ and Haraway’s ‘Cyborg Manifesto’ ” at the International Conference on Romanticism, held Oct. 10-13 in Tallahassee, Fla. She has been named a Dean’s Teaching Fellow for 2003-04.
- **Allison Hobgood**, presented a paper on Modernism and Ethics at the Modernist Studies Association 4th Annual Conference, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Oct. 31-Nov. 3.
- **Rebecca Koeser** presented a paper, “Nonlinearity and *Four Quartets*,” at the 23rd Annual Meeting of the T.S. Eliot Society held Sept. 27-29 in St. Louis.
- **Aimee Pozorski** presented a paper, “Modernism’s Ambivalent Beginnings: Infantry and Infanticide in *A Farewell to Arms*,” at The Modernist Studies Association Fourth Annual Conference, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Oct. 31-Nov.3.
- **Elizabeth Brewer Redwine** chaired a panel on contemporary Irish literature at the Central New York Conference on Language and Literature held at the State University of New York, Cortland, Oct. 27.🍷

Afrofuturism in Virtual Space

In what could now be classified as a prophetic essay, Walter Benjamin's 1936 work *The Storyteller* mourns the devaluation of human experience a tragic consequence of diminished human intimacy. Our current age could easily be understood as the manifestation of all that Benjamin feared. We communicate, produce, and even relax electronically. Set within virtual space, we send deletable messages and create transportable/translatable products, which are all driven to the center of the event at the cost of displacing the individual and his or her experience. The human being, who produces art and literature in alienated solitude, wanes in significance when compared to the value of the product itself. Many would argue that in this environment, the individuality, the diversity necessary to creating original art becomes obsolete. In fact, as individuals we too become obsolete we are all the same in our insignificance. One of the more troubling results of this development is that sameness operates as a threat to actual human exchange and growth, an event that can only occur in the face of difference. Our over-reliance on technology creates a supportive environment for the popular assumption that in the virtual world, culture, gender, and economics matter very little. We are reduced to transient, cultureless, producers whose value rests in the marketability of our products. Popular rhetoric concerning race and culture during last decade articulates this shift in thought and its relationship to technology. Consider Rodney Kings 1992 query: Can't we all just get along? alongside of the resulting reception of cultural difference, which generally suggests that we are a multicultural society with equally



Miles

diverse and equally relevant perspectives on historical and contemporary reality. I would argue that Rodney King posed his question as a way of suggesting that we get along by respecting our differences and honoring our shared humanity. The post Rodney King rhetorical shift defines all ethnic cultures as equally diverse and as having equally relevant historical perspectives. This shift ends up blurring unique histories and experiences so that they come to fit under one broad "ethnic" category. This ethnic categorization masquerades as a democratic solution to respecting difference while it actually functions to erase it. Two examples of this phenomenon during the last decade are the appearances of university courses and college readers on the broad subject of ethnic literatures and cultures. A reader with Native American, Chicano, African, Asian, and African American narratives will introduce students to five ethnic groups through readings and class discussions. The institution of higher learning will have fulfilled its promise to embrace diversity, and the students will generally be content with their introduction to the Other. The problem is that no real cultural exchange will have occurred. This lack of exchange is made more complex by the practice

of excluding Anglo-American literature and culture from courses and texts on so-called ethnic writers. This textual absence implicitly defines the Anglo American group as non-ethnic. By exclusion, these texts and the courses they are used in reenact the traditional practice of defining whiteness as not Other. The status becomes a desirable one—it promises to allow the student to study without enduring the scrutiny of being studied. The only one place where the Other can attain the freedoms associated with being the non-ethnic is in the virtual world where cultural homogeneity and other forms of sameness render us all non-ethnic. The aim of Afrofuturism is to work against this trend by using cultural distinctions as a means of recognizing and sharing the experiences of our humanity. Alondra Nelson's recently edited collection of essays, *Afrofuturism*, addresses the emergence of flawed ideologies of race that have developed out of contemporary philosophical analyses of social changes in the technological age.

ALUMNI/AE NEWS

DANSBY EVANS '98 recently accepted a position as an Editorial Associate with the New York office of Mercer Delta Consulting, an organizational change consultancy.

LAURA RUNGE GORDON '93, Associate Professor at the University of South Florida, edited *Clara Reeve's OLD ENGLISH BARON and Horace Walpol's CASTLE OF OTRANTO*, which was published by College Publishing, 2002.

Seeking to join the current discourse on Afrofuturism, I am working jointly with my student at Morehouse College, Charles Joseph, to develop a theoretical approach to reading Afrofuturistic literature. As a starting point, we have noticed that the practice of Afrofuturism often engages in a moral and historical critique—one that seeks justice psychologically and/or spiritually. Invariably, the historical critique involves a journey in time and space. At the journey's end, the protagonist returns to the present transformed by knowledge of a more complex historical truth than previously understood and imbued with the incarnation of a reclaimed African identity. Writers of this genre are driven to revisit historical wounds as a means of authenticating and contextualizing a haunting past, which is too horrific to approach directly. In the process of revisiting these wounds, the protagonist journeys backward through time and space in order to make a historical critique. An excellent example of Afrofuturistic literature is Octavia Butler's novel, *Kindred*. In keeping with Afrofuturistic ideology, neither Butler nor her protagonists use technology to facilitate movements between the past and the present. Butler's body of fiction further distinguishes itself as Afrofuturistic

in that the journeys are morally based and psychologically restorative; in addition, through her protagonists' journeys, Butler reveals the human form and reproductive power of traumatic history.

My interest in trauma testimony and its relationship to literary production led to my interest in Afrofuturism, but recently I have come to understand and appreciate the revolutionary potential that the practice of Afrofuturism has within the virtual world. The works of Afrofuturistic writers privilege the exchange of human experience and challenge the popular notion that in technological space we are all the same; we are all "non-ethnic." In Afrofuturistic literature, the desired product is the exchange of human experience—this is what takes center stage. As Butler's *Kindred* demonstrates, Afrofuturism uses the reality of ethnic and historical difference to encourage our collective journey toward reconciliation and healing.

Writers within this genre facilitate the collective journey by using the most abstract components of humanity—the psyche and the spirit. Not only do these components transport their protagonists between the past and the present but they also operate in firm opposition to the popular use of "scientific formulas" or "time machines" found in European

science fiction. The use of the human spirit and the human psyche as vehicles for historic and communal examination is an African based practice that continues to resonate across the Diaspora. Therefore, these particular vehicles, which are necessary to enact critical movements between the present and past, are in and of themselves ethnic and historical. For those who share portions of this historical reality, locating the origins of an unexplained cultural practice brings with it a sense of continuity and a sense of justice. The use of virtual space to engage in such a restorative practice serves to strain the credulity of those who would suggest that there is only one dehumanizing and fatal outcome to our use of virtual space. I imagine that Benjamin would approve of Afrofuturism's rebellion—its drive to privilege difference and share human experience within the very environment that seemed to guarantee a peculiar death, a death by sameness. 🌟

—Diana Miles '00, Assistant Professor at Morehouse College, is the author of *Women, Violence, & Testimony* in the works of Zora Neale Hurston. She can be reached at dmiles@morehouse.edu

JASON B. JONES '02, a Marion L. Brittain Teaching Fellow in Georgia Tech's School of Literature, Communication, and Culture, delivered a lecture entitled, "The Time of Interpretation: Psychoanalysis and the Past" at Emory in January.

MARK LEDDEN '96 is a partner in The Exeter Group in Atlanta, an executive coaching and professional development consultancy serving global professional services firms and Fortune 100 companies.

DIANA MILES '00, Assistant Professor of English at Morehouse College, has had her book, *Women, Violence, and Testimony in the Works of Zora Neale Hurston* published by Peter Lang as part of the African American Literature and Culture Series.

DAVE RANEY '99, has had several works published of late. "Culture of Contagion: Germs, Aliens, and American Identity" will appear in the Winter 2003 issue of *Popular Culture Review*. His "Whose Author-

ity? Learning and Active Resistance" will appear in a forthcoming issue of *College Teaching*, and his work, "Encroaching Dark: Germs and Race in 20th Century American Literature" will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Literature & Medicine*.

ANYA KRUGOVOY SILVER '97, Assistant Professor at Mercer University in Macon, has had her book, *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*, published by Cambridge University Press. 🌟

English, CW Majors Among PBK Inductees

Three English majors and two Creative Writing majors were among the 130 recent inductees into Phi Beta Kappa at Emory University.

NATASHA BELL of Atlanta, the daughter of Melvin and Quinn Bell, was among the recent inductees to the academic honor society. A graduate of Cathedral Academy, Bell began her college study at Emory at Oxford. The English and Sociology double major notes that a Postmodern Literature course, taught by Lucas Carpenter at Oxford, and a course titled Development of Sociological Theory, taught by Frank Lechner, have been most influential in her college career. "These courses explored discourses of human behavior and the human psyche that are absolutely fascinating," relays Bell. "In fact, I'm incorporating material from both courses into my honors thesis. After I graduate, I plan to pursue a joint Masters in Public Policy and Juris Doctorate."

OLIVER D. FERRARI an English major from Atlanta who graduated from Saint Pius X School, is a new member of Phi Beta Kappa. He is the son of Pierre Ferrari and Lalor Cadley. Ferrari, who is currently completing a semester of study abroad in England, is very articulate about his experience at Emory. "As much as I'd like to plug an English course, I'd have to say the most influential course for me was Neuro Behavioral Biology 201, Foundations of Behavior," comments Ferrari. "It got me off the science track, while completely realigning my perceptions of human nature and behavior. It told me things I didn't want to hear, which is quite an accomplishment. Any class which forces me to reconsider and advance my means of understanding, explaining phenomena is influential. Of the English courses, I would say Poetry 205 with Peter West. He was simply a fine teacher, and somehow the class made me switch my major (from NBB)."

LAUREN GILES, an English major from Stone Mountain was also among the inductees. She is the daughter of Dr. Michael Giles and Pamela Giles and is a graduate of the Paideia School in Atlanta. After she graduates from Emory, Giles hopes to enter the foreign service or to work with a public-service-oriented organization. Among her most influential classes and professors at Emory: a course entitled Poverty taught by Michael Rich and one on Utopian Literature taught by John Bugge.

ANTON DISCLAFANI, a Creative Writing major from Ocala, Fla. is a new member of Phi Beta Kappa. She is the daughter of Donna and Tony DiSclafani and a graduate of Forest High School. DiSclafani was the

2002 recipient of the Artistine Mann Award in Creative Non-Fiction and one of the first two winners of a Johnston Fellowship for Travel and Research. "The Contemporary Native American Literature course I took sophomore year with Michael Elliott completely changed my view of literature," observes DiSclafani, "and more specifically, what literature should accomplish."

NEIL GARVIN, a graduate of Campbell High School in Smyrna, Ga. is the son of Bud Garvin and Tracie Garvin. He is a Creative Writing major and a recent inductee into Phi Beta Kappa. "The most influential course I have taken at Emory was James Meyer's Freshman Seminar on Theories of Contemporary Art. Professor Meyer's course introduced me to the writings and theories of many people which I would have been unlikely to encounter in English classes, and provided me with an adequate vocabulary with which to interact with contemporary visual art," notes Garvin. "Post-Emory, I want to teach English in Japan. Following that, I plan to go to graduate school."

The origin of Phi Beta Kappa dates from the founding of the Republic, when the Alpha Chapter of Virginia was established in 1776 at the College of William and Mary. There are currently 262 chapters nationally and applications for new chapters are considered at Triennial Conventions.

Emory's chapter, established on April 5, 1929, is the Gamma of Georgia Chapter. Thus, 2004 will mark its 75th anniversary.

Inductees come from the top 10 percent of their graduating classes. ☪



English major Kyle Wamstad, left, is one of four recipients of the Robert T. Jones Jr. Memorial Scholarships. Wamstad will spend a year of study at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. The Jones Scholarships were established in 1976.

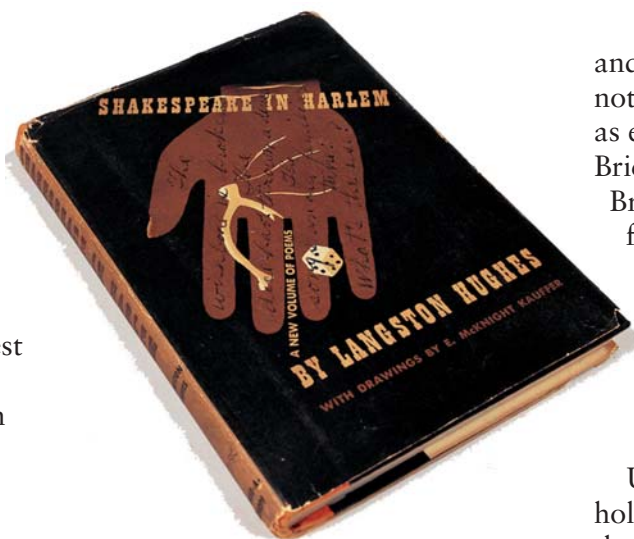
Photo by Jon Rou.

African American Collection Expands

The Special Collections Department at Woodruff Library houses an impressive and diverse body of African American Studies resources. Thanks to efforts by Randall Burkett and other members of the staff, the research facility possesses some of the rarest and most eclectic African American holdings in the country. From literature to history to popular culture, the variety and scope of these finds make this site a researcher's dream, and the acquisitions continue to arrive at an almost staggering rate.

Regarded as one of the best African American Studies Collections at historically white universities, Woodruff Library maintains an extensive collection of books, periodicals, correspondence, literary manuscripts, and memorabilia. The rare book collection is one of the most significant features. Special Collections owns copies of early African American texts including an autographed copy of Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773), the first volume of poetry published by an African American. Emory also owns two copybooks contemporaneous to that book containing previously unpublished poems, and a manuscript version of Wheatley's 1773 poem, "Hymn to Humanity." The manuscript version has significant textual variation from the printed version. The James Weldon Johnson Collection, another extraordinary literary acquisition, provides a medley of literary manuscripts, correspondence, and photographs on one of the premiere writers and activists of the 20th century.

Beyond literature, Woodruff Library owns a significant amount of religious and popular culture print material and ephemera. The Bailey-Thurman Papers, for example, offer researchers a variety of 19th and early 20th-century books, newsletters, and other printed documents on the American and Arkansas Baptist Conventions. Scholars interested in popular culture will find a wealth of broadsides, ephemera,



Illustrations from Special Collections/Woodruff Library

and printed documents on such notable early 20th-century figures as expatriate performer, Bricktop, owner of the famous Bricktop Nightclubs, and the fascinating religious leader, Father Divine. They will also enjoy perusing the press books, posters, and ephemera from the African American Cinema Collection.

This year alone, Emory University's Langston Hughes holdings have grown to become the third most important repository in the country. Three collections, the Matt N. and Evelyn Graves Crawford Papers,

the Louise Thompson Patterson Papers, and the Camille Billops and James V. Hatch Archives, afford Emory such bragging rights. Individually, each collection provides an extensive library, as well as valuable information about many of the literary and social activities of the Harlem Renaissance. These collections include records on Matt & Evelyn Crawford, Langston Hughes, and Louise Thompson Patterson's affiliations with the Communist Party, including correspondence about a proposed film on the Negro in American life, slated to be filmed in the Soviet Union in 1932. The Camille Billops and James V. Hatch Archives, a "work in progress," has led to more than the expansion of the book and periodical collections. Thanks to the allocation of funds from the library budget, Special Collections underwent a facelift to create a room for the storage and maintenance of these valuable materials.

Recently, Woodruff Library gained the rights to the library and papers of Michel Fabre, one of the premiere scholars of

African American Collections
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For You, Lili Marlene

German newspapers recently reported the news of the death at age 91 of Norbert Schultze. Schultze's career as a writer of songs and operettas spanned nearly the entire 20th century, but surely he will forever be known for a single accomplishment, as the man who in 1938 wrote the wartime *lied*, "Lili Marlene." Translated and sung in nearly 50 different languages, "Lili Marlene" is by far the most popular war song of all time. It's a simple love song, wistful, innocent, and melancholy, sung usually in four (sometimes five) verses. Together they tell the story of a soldier who fondly remembers the woman he loves and how they used to meet each evening by the streetlight outside his barracks. English versions invariably emphasize the song's sentimentality—in one of them the soldier even claims that his beloved inspires him to the extent that he feels neither the cold nor the weight of his rucksack. But in German, the *schmaltz* is offset with a moody fatalism as well as with the soldier's morbid tendency to imagine the world as a play where he no longer has a part:

*It knows your footsteps, your
classy walk
It still shines every evening, but me
it's long forgotten
And if some misfortune should
befall me
Who will stand beside the street
lamp with you, Lili Marlene?*

Maybe that's the real reason for the song's profound appeal to troops in time of war; against the

threat of oblivion, the impulse is to view life as a piece of theater. "It is the very hazard of military situations," writes Paul Fussell, "that turns them theatrical. . . . The whole thing is too grossly farcical, perverse, cruel, and absurd to be credited as a form of 'real life.'"

Whatever its hold on soldiers' imaginations, "Lili Marlene" has had a random history. It's proof that good art, as Barbara Kingsolver says, "doesn't always match the sofa." The song comes from a poem written by Hans Leip, a German soldier during World War I. Leip wrote the poem in 1915 when he was a young infantryman, about to be sent into combat. But though the images in the poem are so particular as to make it seem as if Leip were remembering personal experience, it's not really autobiographical. The woman whom the soldier describes is by most accounts a fiction, a composite figure contrived from two separate women named "Lili" and "Marleen." Neither woman seems to have been involved in a romance with Leip; "Lili" was by some accounts just a friend (she was a clerk in a local grocery store), while "Marleen" was an aide in a military hospital. The poem remained obscure for many years. Leip included it in a collection of his works published in 1937, and the next year it was set to music by the German composer, Norbert Schultze. Schultze was at that time a popular contemporary composer who also wrote backing music to Nazi propaganda films and battle songs. With similar ambitions, he

set Leip's words to music. But Goebbels was displeased by the resulting song because it wasn't a march. Meanwhile, Lale Anderson (the singer for whom Schultze had composed the piece) at first didn't want to sing it, and his publisher (who had commissioned the work) didn't want to play it. Again, "Lili Marlene" languished, and it did not receive any significant



Gruber

exposure until 1941, when the song was approved for broadcast via a radio station in Belgrade to

Rommel's Africa Corps, under the title, "The Song of a Young Sentry." Despite Rommel's misgivings (like Goebbels, he thought the song was too melancholy to inspire the troops), the song became instantly and hugely popular among the soldiers, regardless of which uniforms they wore. That a German song should move the hearts of British troops caused Allied officers some concern, and at first they tried to change their soldiers' minds by educating them. The British film industry produced a short documentary entitled, "The Real Story of Lili Marlene"; meanwhile the BBC launched a campaign to prove that "Lili Marlene" was

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Bloom to Lead Summer Workshop

The Reading Series that is produced each year by the Creative Writing Program, with assistance from African-American Studies, Institute for Women's Studies, and the Department of Psychology, has provided some of the most vivid moments of my four years teaching at Emory. Among those writers who have visited us and shared their work, none has been more vivid, either in what I remember of her or in what our students say about the evening when Amy Bloom stood in front of us in the Jones Room of the Woodruff Library and read her short story, "The Gates are Closing."

She read her story without any preface, read it elegantly and with the perfect voice for what she had written. Simply, sentence by sentence, the story unfolded in the air. She read in a manner so assured that the word "relaxed" would hardly do her justice. It was as if she were inwardly certain that everyone in the room would hear her words exactly as she intended. When she was finished with the reading, she sat down, and that was that.

Lynna Williams had been talking to me about a week-long arts event that the College was planning for the summer of 2003, and we had mulled over a number of possible instructors. After Amy's visit, we knew who we wanted.

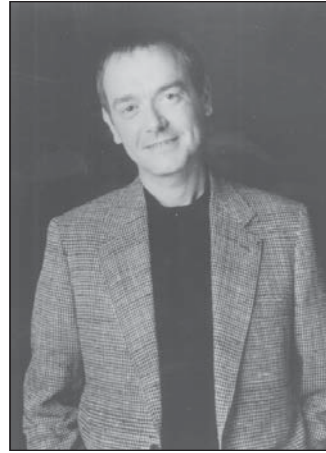
Amy Bloom is the author of three works of fiction, *Come to Me* and *A Blind Man Can See How Much I Love You*, both story collections, and a novel, *Love Invents Us*. Her most recent book is *Normal: Transsexual*

CEOs, Crossdressing Cops, and Hermaphrodites with Attitude, a non-fiction book which probably needs no description beyond its title. *Come to Me* was a finalist for the National Book Award and *Blind Man*

was shortlisted for the National Book Critic's Circle Award. Her short fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Zoetrope*, *Story*, and *Antaeus*, and her work was anthologized in the Best American Short Stories volumes in 1991 and 2000.

In person and on the page, Bloom is remarkable for her clarity. As an example, here is her description of what she plans to share with students during her five-day residency at Emory in June: Her title for the workshop is "Break it Down and Build it Up," and as a course description, she offers the following: "We'll work on what should be changed and what should be abandoned. The difference between a pretty good sentence and a great one. How to understand the mechanics and mysteries of word choice. How to write from the heart without losing it on the page." Simple, clean and clear, and yet, when one reads the description, one could hardly ask for more from a workshop on writing.

So, rather than write a column introducing myself as the



Grimsley

new director of the Creative Writing Program (which I am), I thought it would be wiser to use this space to alert you to the fact that Amy Bloom is coming here to teach, May 27 through June 1.

Students will attend a daily class with Bloom and will have a private meeting with her during the five days. I will have a public

conversation with her and she may share some of her writing with us; students will read from their work on another evening during the event. For a fuller description on this course, and information on how to enroll, go to the Web site: <http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/CREATIVESWRITING/resources/festival.html>

The short course is part of a week-long experiment in arts courses by Emory College; other departments with offerings include Theatre Studies, Visual Arts, and Music. For information on all the summer offerings: <http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/news/index.htm#5>. ☛

—Jim Grimsley is Senior Lecturer and Director of Creative Writing. His latest novel is titled *BOULEVARD* He can be reached at jgrims@emory.edu

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FRANCES SMITH FOSTER, Charles Howard Candler Professor of English and Women's Studies, is on leave at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for African American Studies (see related story below). She has an affiliation with the Women in Religion Program at the Harvard Divinity School and in October gave a presentation on her research. She spent two days in October at Trinity College team-teaching a class in American Poetry, and delivering a talk on Morality, Marriage and Family in 19th Century African America. Also in October, Foster visited Smith College giving a

workshop to the Kahn Institute on Reparations in the U.S. and a public lecture called "Reconstructing African American Families."

JIM GRIMSLEY, Director of Creative Writing, appeared as an invited panelist at the New Orleans Words & Music Festival in December, sponsored by the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society. In March he is scheduled to return to New Orleans to give a master class and serve as a panelist at the Tennessee Williams Festival; most notable will be a panel on southern humor with Dorothy Allison and Rick Bragg. Grimsley's play *Fascination* opens at About Face Theatre in

Atlanta on May 3 and his seventh novel, *The Ordinary*, is scheduled to be released by Tor Books in the fall of 2003.

GERALDINE HIGGINS, Associate Professor, has been granted tenure.

JOHN JOHNSTON, Professor, presented "A Future for Autonomous Agents: Machinic Merkwelten and Artificial Evolution" at the Society of Literature and Science Conference at the California Institute of Technology on Oct. 12, 2002. On Oct. 14, he presented (by invitation) "Crossing Discourse Networks: Jacques Lacan and

Foster Senior Fellow at Harvard's DuBois Institute

Frances Smith Foster, Charles Howard Candler Professor of English and Women's Studies, is on leave for 2002-2003. As a Senior Fellow at the DuBois Institute for African American Studies at Harvard University, Foster is working on "19th Century Afro-Protestant Representations of Family, Marriage and Morality," a book length study of African American domestic culture as reflected in African American media. Of her current work Foster notes: "I'm learning a lot and stirring the waters in various academic ponds since the research I'm doing directly and dramatically contradicts much of what people have been taught to believe about early African American culture. I'm working with the Afro-Protestant Press—writings and writers who wrote within 'the family'—that is affirmative literature created or published to define and refine the ideals of family life, gender roles, etc."

Foster, who is the outgoing

Director of the Institute for Women's Studies and a current Senior Fellow at the Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Religion at Emory, has focused much of her academic work in the area of African American women writers from the 19th century. Throughout 2002, she lectured both nationally and internationally on women writers, and is also currently contributing as co-editor to the 2nd edition of *Norton Anthology of African American Literature* and as advisory editor to an edition of the *National Biography of African America*. Among her most recent publications are three books released in 2001 which she edited: *Norton Critical Edition of Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, edited with Nellie Y. McKay; *Concise Oxford Guide to African American Literature*, edited with William L. Andrews and Trudier Harris; and *Behind the Scenes: Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House by Elizabeth Keckley*, edited with an

extensive introduction.

Before joining the faculty at Emory in 1994, Foster served on the faculties of the University of California at San Diego (1988-94), and San Diego State University (1982-88), and as a lecturer at SDSU (1972-76); she served as an instructor at the University of California at San Diego (1971-72), a lecturer at California State University, Northridge (1970-71).

Foster received a Ph.D. in British and American Literature from the University of California at San Diego in 1976, an M.A. in British and American Literature from the University of Southern California in 1971, and a B.S. in education from Miami University in 1964.

Foster will return to Emory in the Fall of 2003. 🌟



Foster

Cybernetics, Talan Memmott and Psychoanalysis” at the Center for Art and Design at Pasadena, Calif.

WALTER KALAJIAN, Professor, presented an invited lecture, “On Witnessing” at Colgate University in November and published *Understanding Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing* with Houghton Mifflin in December. He also contracted with Houghton Mifflin to publish a forthcoming book entitled *Understanding Poetry: An Introduction*.

SALLY WOLFF KING's essay, “How Babies Could Come and How They Could Die”: Eudora Welty's Children of the Dark Cradle” will appear in the *Mississippi Quarterly Special Issue*, forthcoming in the Spring 2003, in honor of Eudora Welty.

RICK RAMBUSS, Professor, was invited to the University of Michigan in October to present a lecture on Shakespeare's poem “Venus and Adonis,” titled “What it Feels Like for a Boy.” He delivered the same lecture at Vanderbilt University in November. At the Modern Language Association Convention held in New York in December, Rambuss delivered two papers: one called “Crashaw and the Metaphysical Shudder” for a panel about metaphysical poetry, and another for a special session devoted to Shakespeare's “Venus and Adonis.”

Rambuss has been awarded a University Research Council grant for the Spring semester to continue work on his critical edition of Richard Crashaw's poetry. Rambuss's review of the book, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven*, by

Duke University historian and law professor Cynthia Herrup, appears in the latest volume of *Shakespeare Studies*.

RONALD SCHUCHARD, Professor, has published “Why I Go to Colindale [the British Newspaper Library],” representing the perspective of a foreign scholar to the administration of the British Library in *Do We Want to Keep Our Newspapers?*, ed. David McKitterick (London: King's College, 2002). His essay, “The Countess Cathleen and the Chanting of Verse, 1892-1912,” has appeared in *Yeats's Collaborations*, ed. Warwick Gould and Wayne Chapman (London: Palgrave, 2002). His lead essay in the January 2003 issue of *Modernism/Modernity*, “Burbank with a Baedeker, Eliot with a Cigar: American Intellectuals, Anti-Semitism, and the Idea of Culture,” initiates a new debate over Eliot's alleged anti-Semitism, with responses by David Bromwich, Ronald Bus, Denis Donoghue, Anthony Julius, James Longenbach, and Marjorie Perloff. The debate concludes with Schuchard's reply, “Eliot and the Foregone Conclusions.”

JEFFREY WALKER, Professor, was a plenary speaker at the Conference of the Status and Future of Rhetorical Studies, sponsored by the Alliance of Rhetoric Societies, and held at Northwestern University, Sept. 11-14.

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actually a prostitute. This, according to the BBC executives who conceived of the scheme, was supposed to subvert the woman's erotic appeal to British soldiers. But the effort to sully the reputation of “Lili Marlene” only strengthened the song's fascination, and when Marlene Dietrich began singing it in shows to troops (she sang it, she later reported, for “three long years, in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Alaska, Greenland, Iceland, and England”), it became famous on all fronts. More than 50 years after the war's end, its status is still mythic; Robert Peters, for example, turned to it in 1995 to sum up his wartime experience, titling his memoir of World War II, *For You, Lili Marlene*.

In the catalog of 20th century artists, where do we rank Schultze? His talent, such as it was, seems to have been partly misspent. As a result of his propagandistic compositions, Schultze was classified after the close of the war as a Nazi sympathizer. His music was banned, and for several years he was forbidden to practice his profession; during that time he worked mainly as a gardener and also in heavy construction. It's ironic but also thought-provoking that the composer of “Lili Marlene,” regrettably, was also the author of “Bombs Over England” and “When Tanks Roll in Africa.” Schultze ultimately repented these compositions, and now, more than half a century later, “Lili Marlene” stands as his crowning achievement. Lale Anderson, asked once to explain the raw power of this simple, deeply moving *lied*, gave only this answer: “Can the wind explain what makes it become a storm?” It makes one wonder if the art ever really belongs to the artist, or whether the real thing, when it comes, comes on its own terms, unruly and unbidden, a gift from the muses on Mount Helicon. 🌟

—Bill Gruber is professor and Chair of the Department of English. He can be reached at wegrube@emory.edu

A Landscape of Remembrance and Forgetting

Just off the coast of my hometown, Gulfport, Miss. is a series of barrier islands—Cat, Horn, Deer, and Ship—that separate the dirty coastal waters from the clearer Gulf. This coast is 26 miles of man-made beach, sand dumped on the mangroves to create a resort town—which it was in the 1920s. Standing on the seawall near Long Beach, just west of Gulfport, you can see the trees of one of the islands blocking the view of the horizon, keeping you from seeing, fully, what else is out there. Such metaphors and deceptions abound in this landscape of my home: The island appears closer than it is, seems as if you could walk there, as if the shallow waters hold no mysteries in their slight depths.

During the Civil War, newly freed slaves and destitute whites often rowed out in small boats—some perishing from exposure or drowning—seeking refuge at the Union camp on Ship Island. Fort Massachusetts was home to the 2nd Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards—a regiment of African-American soldiers, primarily freedmen—whose primary duty was to maintain the fort as a prison for Confederate soldiers. Today, during the warm months, anyone can buy passage on one of the small cruisers leaving Gulfport for the island twice daily. Not long ago, I went out to Ship Island with my brother and my husband.

We got to the docks early, bought our tickets, and milled around with other passengers, listening to the boat engine and watching a cameraman set up his equipment. When it was our turn, we stood before the camera, loaded down with our cooler and towels. In the photograph, I am in the middle, squinting at the white sun glaring off a metal railing. I didn't know it then, but I was embarking on a return of sorts—an excursion into memory and forgetting.

Before this trip I hadn't been to Ship Island since I was a child. The summers back home with my grandmother included a 4th of July ritual of gathering our picnic and heading to the pier to catch the boat. I'd stand on deck for just over an hour watching for the fort to loom up from the north side of the island. Once there, I'd play all afternoon in the warm Gulf, the water clear enough to see fish dart by or sand

Southern Pastoral

In the dream, I am with the Fugitive
Poets. We're gathered for a photograph.
Behind us, the skyline of Atlanta
hidden by the photographer's backdrop—
a lush pasture, green, full of soft-eyed cows
lowing, a chant that sounds like no, no. Yes,
I say to the glass of bourbon I'm offered.
We're lining up now—Robert Penn Warren,
his voice just audible above the drone
of bulldozers, telling us where to stand.
Say "Race" the photographer croons. I'm in
blackface again when the flash freezes us.
My father's white I tell them, and rural.
You don't hate the south, they ask. You don't hate it?

—N.D. Trethewey

clouds kicked up by scuttling crabs. Still, like the sand that covered over the mangroves, that water hid something too. All the graves of the men who died at the fort had been lost when Hurricane Camille hit in 1969. The storm cut the island in half and the graves had been in the middle. Now, the island landscape seems stark—the glaring sand softened occasionally by a thin growth of island grasses and sea oats, the whole thing seemingly laid bare except for the fort and a couple of convenience buildings.

Even the massive fort has become a symbol for the kinds of figurative barriers erected against parts of history and our public memory of it. Visitors to the fort today will see the plaque placed at the entrance by the Daughters of the Confederacy listing the names of the Confederate men once interred there, but no similar plaque memorializing the names of the Native Guards. If tourists don't know to ask about the history of these black soldiers, the Park Ranger most likely will overlook this aspect in his tour. This suggests a great deal about the way Americans

remember the Civil War and its aftermath, how we construct public memory with its omissions and embellishments.

The Daughters of the Confederacy staked a claim when they mounted the plaque on Fort Massachusetts—a public document for all to see, the landscape around it bearing the weight of memory and monument, and willed forgetting as well. In writing these poems, I see myself as staking a similar claim, positioning myself, as in that photograph on the docks, in the middle, as a native daughter of Mississippi and the South, not at the margins of history and public memory. My work is an attempt to fill in the blanks—the deceptions and erasures—inherent in this natural and man-made landscape.

Back from my journey to Ship Island and standing on the man-made beach, I thought of what was buried beneath my feet, how dirty and unclear the water had become. The mangrove was a natural habitat with its own species of flora and fauna, and not without its own kind of beauty. Without it, the stretch of Mississippi Coast I call home has lost some of its native beauty. Sickly, transplanted palm trees line the beach where massive, live oaks once stood. Confederate flags still fly here, though a prouder history is the less-known one of the former slaves who fought for their own freedom and citizenship, thus becoming agents in the fulfillment of the greatest promise of America.

Within these public reminders of history there also remain suggestions of the spaces to be filled in with what has been forgotten or left out, and this landscape serves as a metaphor for that possibility: the barrier islands are ever-changing, undergoing subtle shifts much like the changes in our understanding of public memory as more untold narratives are recovered.

Just east of Gulfport, in Biloxi, Jefferson Davis's last home, Beauvoir, stands facing the beach, a monument to a particular past. Named Beauvoir most likely because of the beautiful view of the Mississippi Sound that it affords, the house, however, also looks out toward the barrier islands, with Ship Island in the middle. It is a testament to the notion that a "good view," or the true view, is attainable if one is willing to look past the barriers and see it.



—Natasha Trethewey is an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing and the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for her *NATIVE GUARD*. She can be reached at ntrethe@emory.edu



Trethewey

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ment of what is still an emerging field.

In Creative Writing, both Komunyakaa and Trethewey are leading voices advancing the African American poetic tradition. The newly appointed Woodruff Professor of Poetry and Pulitzer Prize winner, Komunyakaa, is a poet of international reputation and scope. From Vietnam, to Australia, to Louisiana, his poetry sweeps the globe. Drawn from the oral tradition, Trethewey's books—*Domestic Work* and *Bellocq's Ophelia*—illuminate the overlooked dimensions of black women's lives, lending them grace and dignity. Her attention to the intricacies of place, her command of image and her mastery of form have already earned her a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Cave Canem and Golier poetry prizes and make her an emerging voice of the South.

Foster has recovered full texts of influential 19th century women writers such as Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Elizabeth Keckley; she has written histories of slave narratives and of 18th and 19th century black women's writing; and her current studies examine Afro-Protestant church influences on early African American literature, and family, marriage, and sexual morality as represented in the Afro-Protestant Press. Jackson, the author of the first biography of Ralph Ellison, applies his encyclopedic knowledge of the mid-century arts scene to a history of African American literature and culture from 1935-1970, and to yet another biography, this one on Chester Himes. Focusing on Sterling A. Brown's poetry, my own work addresses the crucial role New Negro art played in American modernism. I am currently editing Brown's travel narrative, *A Negro Looks at the South*.

Finally, Awkward, the Longstreet Chair of English and African American Literature, represents the most innovative and provocative theoretical work in the field. His first two monographs—"Inspiring Influences" and "Negotiating Difference"—redefined how we read black feminist tradition and culturally configure difference(s) respectively. As he continues to rethink the paradigms defining the field, he is pursuing book-length studies: one on representations of post-Civil Rights black identities; the second applies literary analysis to three rhythm and blues albums, in pursuit of more illuminating readings of black popular culture.

With outstanding students, papers, scholars, and artists, African American literature at Emory has truly been reborn.

—Mark Sanders, Associate Professor of English and Director of the Program of African American Studies, is the editor of *A SON'S RETURN: SELECTED ESSAYS OF STERLING A. BROWN*. He can be reached at msander@emory.edu

Ellison Biographer Discusses Genius

(Editor's Note: Lawrence P. Jackson, author of the first biography of the life of Ralph Ellison, entitled, *RALPH ELLISON: EMERGENCE OF GENIUS*, joined the Emory English Department faculty in the Fall of 2002. He was interviewed for this edition of *LOOSE CANONS* by Robert J. Patterson, a graduate student whose academic interests are in cultural studies and African American literature.)

Robert J. Patterson: Would you explain how Ralph Ellison became familiar with the concept of invisibility?

Lawrence P. Jackson: There had been a very popular H.G. Wells novel, which later became a movie, but during the 1940s invisibility had become an overriding theme in Ellison's life. When he did come up with the line and the theme, somewhere between 1943 and August 1945, he was good friends with Richard Wright. In 1945, he probably had an advanced galley of Wright's autobiography *Black Boy*. When Ellison produces the theme of invisibility, he is writing what to me is really his most profound piece of literary criticism, "Richard Wright's Blues." He is thinking about Wright's title *Black Boy*, and he comes up with a kind of antithesis with *Invisible Man*. Henry Louis Gates has talked most about the signifying elements between those two terms though I'd say there's a dialectical relationship between them. Ellison was thinking about

Wright's criticism of American black life and how Wright was being created and then consumed by the American literary market place as an archetypal black writer whose bitterness stood for a generation.

Patterson: Would you discuss Ellison's relationship with James Baldwin and Langston Hughes?

Jackson: Ellison met Baldwin in the summer of 1947 or 1948. They had hooked up for only a brief conversation. I don't think Ellison showed Baldwin any of his work, but I believe Baldwin might have showed Ellison *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, which at the time Baldwin had titled *Crying Holy*. At the time, Baldwin was well regarded. For all intents and purposes, Baldwin had been adopted by the important editors in the New York literary scene, particularly the Jewish American journals, *Commentary* and *Direction*. He was on the verge of having his reviews published in *Partisan Review*. Around this time, Ellison started to become suspicious of the younger generation, black men in their early 20s, who were slam dunking their way through literary America. They were not going through the same kind of apprenticeship he had gone through. Furthermore, Ellison had a fairly typical 1950s psychoanalytic understanding of homosexuality, which classified homosexuality as a psychological disorder. My sense is that he found Baldwin to be confused

and very distant from the subject of his fiction and was unsure of Baldwin's potential to have a successful career. Ellison thought Baldwin still had a lot to learn about himself.

Langston Hughes and Ellison, on the other hand, were very much like family. Hughes certainly treated him as such for the entirety of his life. Wherever he could support Ellison, Hughes supported him, and I think the same thing is pretty true for Ellison's public relationship with Hughes. There is definitely a dynamic—Hughes is 12 years older than Ellison—of a younger writer trying to scale literary heights. The young writer sees the older person as a measuring stick. Ellison also wanted a greater commitment to literary craft than Hughes was capable of giving. He thought that Hughes' politics should have been sharper in the 1930s and 1940s, and that Hughes should have pushed himself to try to write a great work of literature in that same period. Nonetheless, they were good friends. It would be interesting to see if Ellison spoke at Hughes funeral, and to see what he said.

Patterson: What led Ellison to his period of isolation following the publication of *Invisible Man*?

Jackson: Ellison always said that the pace of events in the U.S. in the 20th century moved so quickly that he was unable to keep his imagination a jump ahead. Ellison believed that the writer

should be a prophetic kind of figure. If you look at *Invisible Man*, Ellison says in the opening pages that the events take place 85 years after the Emancipation Proclamation. He wants to stick the reader in this historical time and certainly many of the technological aspects of the novel suggest it is 1949 or 1950. Depending on how familiar you are with the history, however, it also seems like something that could be out of the 1930s. For example, the power of the Brotherhood and the riot of 1935 could situate the novel in the 1930s. *Invisible Man's* publication in 1952 and the Supreme Court decision in 1954 [*Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the outcome of which began the arduous dismantling of segregation in America] lead Ellison to believe that *Invisible Man* would have a short shelf life because of the rapid and decisive changes in American society. The end of legal segregation was such a shift. Ellison always wanted to show people that segregation was a fluid structure, a structure never completely cemented or calcified, and often it had far more of a presence in the psychological dimension than in the physical dimension. Racial segregation comes into place in the 1920s and has a fairly short life span. That is not to say that segregation does not damage people's lives, destroy, murder and persecute. Nonetheless, I think that Ellison believed that *Invisible Man* was going to have a limited impact not only because of the changes in American society, but also because when the book was published it was well received and it was already like a relic. I think he wanted the next work to be



Lawrence Jackson, right, and Robert Patterson, take a moment to talk in the Schatten Gallery at Woodruff Library. Photo by Mary Alma Durrett.

significant and far reaching. That kind of ambition is absolutely important. If there is anything we can inculcate our students with it would be ambition. There is, however, a danger or ambivalence in that kind of ambition. It can strangle one and I think that it led him into the isolation. He needed more time by himself to be able to come up with literary power, and a lot of what he was trying to do with the second novel was to give it a certain kind of rhetorical or lyrical power. I don't think he was ever really fully satisfied with what he did with *Invisible Man*. In his second effort, he spent a great deal of time re-reading passages to make sure he had the rhythm of the language. He wanted to produce a work in which the prose read like verse and the music of language carried equal significance to the meaning. While he is really in this kind of ethereal place, with celestial ambitions, the real world

and real life made some serious demands upon the best recognized African American writer in the United States. Ellison had a choice to make and he chose the importance of his craft and the privilege he had as an artist over the responsibility that he had as a highly articulate African American. After 1957, Ellison wrote a couple of pieces on music for *Saturday Review* and for *High Fidelity* and gave a speech at the Library of Congress on what it was like to grow up as a writer. Between 1963 and 1964, he pulled back into the political fray with his famous exchange with Irving Howe. Beyond that, throughout the 1960s, he pretty much resisted opportunities, obligations, responsibilities, to serve as a public critic of the shifting American cultural and political landscape. From my point of view, I think he could have done both to greater profit.

Jackson, Patterson continued on next page

This is hindsight. At the time, it must have seemed like his novel was going to come out any day and would have proven the time well spent. I think that during the 1960s, as in all time, you need your best voices saying as much as you can possibly take. Ellison had an important and powerful message that Americans needed to hear over and over again: Basically, that dreams of cultural and racial purity are delusions. Much of the isolation he brought upon himself. Furthermore, there was a certain degree of professional jealousy that he received from some black writers less well known to the white American public. He was rejected by people who had been connected to Paul Robeson's radical newspaper, and some of the Harlem Writer's groups during the 1950s and 1960s, and various student activists and Black Arts Movement critics. I think they definitely wanted to see a great deal more public activism and commitment to anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist kinds of stances and Ellison didn't provide any of that to my knowledge. I can't think of any example of him making a public statement about social policy or economic policy, or the direction of Civil Rights in the United States. Most recently, Ishmael Reed has taken Ellison to task.

Patterson: Which of his essays would you say makes the most significant contribution and why?

Jackson: His most popular essay is "What America Would Be Like Without Blacks." The most significant essay winds up being "The World and the Jug." "The World and the Jug" is a profound statement not only of the definition of the African American condition, but particularly the definition and condition of the writer. And by extension, the definition of the human condition in the face of political and social obligations. In some ways it is kind of like what Ellison would have thought of as a rift of Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*. What does it mean to be a young man growing up in a conservative, Catholic environment, with a fairly rigid education? What does it mean to have a certain kind of duty in a relationship with a family member—a mother who wants you to take

communion, but you don't want to because you don't believe in that stuff anymore—what do you have? Ellison wants to extend that and he wants to avoid the pitfall of a narrow understanding of himself locked into a racial identity that disables other kinds of responses and feelings.

For me, the most significant essay is "Twentieth-Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity." (I always try to remind people that this came out 40 years before Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*.) Basically, Ellison says that when you read Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Twain you see a disfigured black person that is either grotesque or that has been entirely erased, but the person still has a powerful presence. This idea had to be one of the most original, intellectual ideas to come from an African

American critic in Ellison's time. Ellison also says that if we, African Americans, accept the fact that we are inextricably linked to the origin and evolution and development of this society, then we have to take responsibility for what it has become. Ellison pioneers this body of thought that doesn't want to dwell on the "Negro Problem," which it was called in the 1940s. He says this is a white problem, and of course, James Baldwin says the same thing in the 1950s; white Americans are obsessed with blacks and that psychologically they [have a] need to repress blacks, but are only halfway successful. I find that idea interesting and fascinating. I also like to see Ellison make the

Ellison also says that if we, African Americans, accept the fact that we are inextricably linked to the origin and evolution and development of this society, then we have to take responsibility for what it has become.

connections with American literature. In high school, I had to read James Fenimore Cooper, and while reading it, none of this stuff was connecting. I have always appreciated and admired Ellison, however, for demonstrating the multi-colored strands of the American personality that you inevitably see in all this stuff. It's all there because human beings are prone to truth telling—at least any genuine artistic effort can be characterized as an episode of truth telling. 🍷

If you would like to continue the discussion about Ellison and his work, Jackson can be reached at lpjacks@emory.edu. Patterson can be reached at ripatte@emory.edu.

A New Look at the Black 18th Century

While African-American writers and their texts have become more and more accepted within American literary traditions, canons, and literature courses, important early authors and texts are still being marginalized and neglected. Canonical writers such as Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Richard Wright, to name a few, have made their way into the classroom with regularity; still scarce are the writings of Phillis Wheatley and Jupiter Hammon.

My Fall 2002 semester English 101 course entitled “The Black 18th Century” explored the social, political, religious, and cultural position of Black Atlantic writers of the 18th century. Eighteenth-century literature courses all too often fail to consider the role that African-descended people played in shaping the world of the 18th century. A crucial text that I used in my course, *Black London: Life Before Emancipation*, is a dynamic work by Gretchen Gerzina that deconstructs common portrayals of blacks as victims. Gerzina describes 18th century London as a world colored with African-descended people who took advantage of the fact that they were accepted as equal individuals of society. Gerzina’s work provided a nice segue for my students into critically and analytically discussing clippings from 18th-century newspapers and magazines that provided further insight into 18th-century society, culture, and politics.

“The Black 18th Century” required students to explore how African-descended writers on both sides of the Atlantic defined, represented, and wrote themselves into existence. Students explored how “others” defined and presented Black Atlantic writers in books, popular culture, portraits, and words of the 18th century. We focused on canonical 18th century works, *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn, *Essay on Man*, by Alexander Pope, and *Notes on the State of Virginia* by Thomas Jefferson. Students were then challenged to consider the ways in which early African-descended writers struggled to articulate blackness and even whiteness through multiple registers of consciousness and double-directed discourses in an 18th-century world where whites often prescribed dominant notions of “race” and nationhood, literacy and liberty, community and alienation, religion and knowledge. We particularly focused on Phillis

Wheatley, Belinda, Olaudah Equiano, Benjamin Banneker, James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, Francis Williams, and Ignatius Sancho, authors whose texts have been carefully compiled by Vincent Carretta in *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the 18th Century*.

“The Black 18th Century” contained an appropriate balance between English as literature and English rhetoric instruction. Students learned that the frontispiece portraits and prefatory materials for 18th-century narratives, poems, letters, confessions, and petitions serve as maps explaining the rhetorical strategies within the prescribed production and construction of author, editor, and text. Students were challenged to apply these rhetorical principles to their own response papers and essays, writing with a sense of audience, purpose, and strategic sense of argument and design.

We, as teachers of African American, American, Post-Colonial, and British literature, need to push ourselves out of our comfort zone and teach neglected early African-descended writers in particular. Writers such as Phillis Wheatley, Lucy Terry, Olaudah Equiano, and Jupiter Hammon, made it possible for the Ellisons and Morrisons to continue and sustain traditions of black literature. Moreover, their influence is felt beyond the geographical and cultural confines of African-American and American Studies. We as scholars and teachers must rethink traditional models and develop teaching strategies that challenge old and construct new canons, traditions, and theories of African-American literature. ♦*

—Kelli Randall is a graduate student whose area of interest is 18th and 19th century African American Literature. She can be reached at krandal@learnlink.emory.edu

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sity), and finally has for the last half decade been a full-time instructor at another HBCU (Morehouse College), I have had ample opportunity to witness the many intellectual assumptions and tensions that colleagues and students imply and sometimes candidly assert about the feasibility of the HBCU's continued presence. In fact, these somewhat muted battles really reflect our nation's ongoing race and culture wars, as the idea of blackness is relegated to routine scrutiny and is always found to be rationally wanting, while the idea of whiteness is rarely considered because its masked quality represents itself in totalizing phrases like "American," "mainstream," and "normal." However, such a condition is not a cause for despair, but rather a delicious friction that prompts us to flesh out those historical antagonisms that burdened not only Sethe but also Daisy Miller, Jay Gatsby, Edna Pontellier, and James Baldwin's David. Hence, the conflict occasioned by the very presence, the very idea of the HBCU defines these schools' very relevance. For with all the flaws that are evident in HBCUs (and, indeed, they are legion), they keep us interrogating and stripping away the romances of blackness and whiteness; they root themselves in the visionary so as not to get too caught up in the "grey science" of fact minus the context of truth. Hence, the fact of a Harvard, or a Yale, or an Emory without the true cultural context of how each arose at the expense of excluded others keeps such

schools mired in the myths of whiteness much in the same way that HBCUs are burdened with that imposed limitation called blackness.

So all that to say this: *Callaloo*, the premier literary journal of African and African Diaspora Arts and Letters, is sponsoring a special issue entitled "The Idea of the HBCU in the 21st Century." As a co-editor of this issue, I invite thinkers-at-large to submit articles addressing, among other things, how the dramas of race, culture, and utility are reinscribed and are themselves reinvented in "blacademia." As the synergies from (I hope) numerous excellent submissions conjoin to name the slippery demons unique to United Statesians and present in all of our institutions, I do hope that we humans "whitened" and "blackened" by language and history will commit to an immi-

nent academy and larger world where phenotypic diversity is enjoyed but never ranked and hierarchized. Because the HBCU as idea and thing is both a cultural artifact, a cultural Beloved, that demands "rememory" as well as a moral vanguard that urges us all to our greater potential, it is as necessary as bitterness, as finite as race, as ultimate as love. ●*

—James Richardson, a United Negro College Fund Dissertation Fellow, is completing his dissertation entitled "Slanted Truths, Off-Color Remarks: Theorizing Twentieth-Century Jewish and African United Statesian Autobiography." Persons interested in contributing to the special issue of *Callaloo* may e-mail him at <jrichard@morehouse.edu> or joshkah@earthlink.net

African American holdings from page 7

African American literature. Aside from his library, manuscripts, and research materials, Fabre's collection provides Woodruff with the selected material from the archives of such notable literary figures as Ralph Ellison, Margaret Walker, Frank Yerby, Ted Joans, Richard Wright, and Chester Himes. The breadth of this collection is difficult to gauge because, as one happily exhausted Special Collection employee noted, the boxes just keep coming. ●*



Including in Special Collections, this photograph of cabaret performers, including Bricktop, far right.

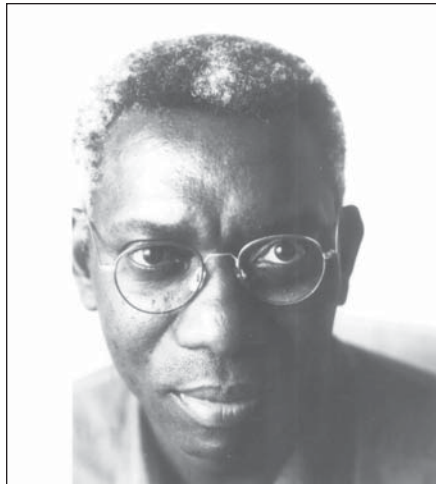
—Rian E. Bowie, a graduate student, is currently working with 19th-century African American periodicals and gender theory. She can be reached at rbowie@learnlink.emory.edu

Komunyakaa Joins Emory Faculty

The acclaimed poet YUSEF KOMUNYAKAA has been named Woodruff Professor of English at Emory and will join the Creative Writing faculty in Fall 2003. Komunyakaa, the winner of Pulitzer Prize for his 1994 publication, *Neon Vernacular: New & Selected Poems 1977-1989*, is currently a Professor with The Council of Humanities and Creative Writing Program at Princeton University.

His published works and subsequent awards are numerous. His most recent work, *Scandalize My Name*, was published by Picador in 2002; *Pleasure Dome: New & Collected Poems, 1975-1999* was published by Wesleyan University Press in 2001; *Talking Dirty to the Gods*, a collection of poems, was published by Farrar Straus & Giroux in 2000, and for it, Komunyakaa garnered the prestigious Ruth Lily Poetry Prize. The book was also a finalist in the National Book Critics Circle Award competition. His work, *Thieves of Paradise*, published in 1998 by Wesleyan University Press was a finalist in the National Book Critics Circle Award competition in 1999. His *Magic City* was published in 1992 and *Dien Cai Dau* published in 1988, both by Wesleyan University Press. For *Dien Cai Dau* he won The Dark Room Poetry Prize. His *I Apologize for the Eyes in My Head* (1986) won the San Francisco Poetry Center Award.

Komunyakaa's prose work is collected in *Blue Notes: Essays*,



Komunyakaa

Interviews & Commentaries, published in 2000 by University of Michigan Press; he co-edited *The Jazz Poetry Anthology* in 1991 by J.A. Sascha Feinstein, and co-translated *The Insomnia of Fire* by Nguyen Quang Thieu in 1995.

The poet served as a Visiting Professor of Creative Writing at Stanford University, Fall 2002. Prior to his professorship at Princeton, which began in 1997, Komunyakaa served as Visiting Professor of English and Creative Writing at Washington University at St. Louis, 1996-97. He was Professor of English and African American Studies at Indiana University, 1993-96, a Holloway Lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley, Spring 1992, and a Visiting Associate Professor of English at Berkeley, Fall 1991. From 1987 to 1993, he was Associate Professor of English and African American Studies at Indiana University, where he had previously served for one year as a Visiting Assistant Professor.

Prior to this, Komunyakaa served as an instructor of English composition or poetry at the University of New Orleans, the University of California of Irvine and Colorado State University.

Komunyakaa, a native of Bogalusa, La. and the winner of Bronze Star for his military service in Vietnam, received his B.A. in English and Sociology from the University of Colorado in 1975, an M.A. in Creative Writing (Poetry) from Colorado State University in 1978 and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing (Poetry) from the University of California, Irvine in 1980.

MICHAEL AWKWARD, Professor of English and Director of the Center for the Study of Black Literature and Culture at the University of Pennsylvania, has been named Longstreet Professor for English and African American Literature at Emory. He will join the Department of English in Fall 2003.

Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania in 1997, Awkward was a Professor of English (1995-97) and Director of the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (1993-96) at the University of Michigan. In 1992, he was the recipient of a President's Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Afro-American Studies at Princeton University.

Awkward received his M.A. (1982) and Ph.D. (1986) from

Awkward continued on next page

Awkward, Vazirani Bring Scholarly Expertise to Emory

Awkward continued from previous page

the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation title was "A Circle of Sisters: An Intertextual Analysis of Afro-American Women's Novels." His undergraduate study was completed at Brandeis University (1980).



Awkward

He served as editor of *New Essays on THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1990. His book *Inspiriting Influences: Tradition, Revision, and Afro-American Women's Novels*, published by Columbia University Press in 1989 was translated into Japanese in 1993. *Negotiating Difference: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Positionality* was published by University of Chicago Press in 1995. His latest book, *Scenes of Instruction: A Memoir* was published by Duke University Press in 2000, and he continues works-in-progress, entitled "Philadelphia Freedoms: Representing Post-Civil Rights Black Identities," and "Black Modernity: New Essays."

Awkward has lectured widely on contemporary African-American literary, cultural and gender studies, in particular, how race and community impact representations of black Americans in contemporary cultural forms.

His professional service

includes, among other things, membership on the Board of Editors of *American Literature*, the Advisory Committee of the PMLA, the Editorial Board of *Narrative*, and the Editorial Board of *Masculinities*.

The poet REETIKA VAZIRANI will be joining the English faculty as a Senior Lecturer in Poetry in Fall 2003. Vazirani was the recipient of the Glenna Lusche/*Prairie Schooner* Award, 2002, for the best essay, "The Art of Breathing," published in the journal in 2001. She will come to Emory after serving as Writer-in-Residence at the College of William and Mary where she taught various Creative Writing courses.

She served as a Visiting Faculty member at The College of New Jersey in 2001; prior to that, Vazirani was Acting Director of the Creative Writing Program at Sweet Briar College, 2000-2001, where she held the position of Margaret Banister Writer-in-Residence, 1998-2001. She served as Visiting Assistant Professor in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Oregon in 1997. Her teaching career began in 1996 at the University of Virginia, where she was an Instructor of poetry workshops.

Her second book of poetry, *World Hotel* was published by Copper Canyon Press in October 2002, and her first collection of poetry, *White Elephants*, is in its third printing by Beacon Press. In addition, Vazirani had two poems included in *Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets of*

Virginia, published by the University Press of Virginia in 2002.



Vazirani

Vazirani began her

studies in creative writing at Boston University and later received her B.A. from Wellesley College in 1984. As a Henry Hoyns Fellow, she received her M.F.A. in the Program of Creative Writing from the University of Virginia in 1997.

She has served as Book Review Editor for *Callaloo*, a *Journal of African-American and African Arts and Letters* since 2000, and as Contributing and Advisory Editor. Vazirani has been First Screener for book contests sponsored by Kent State University, Associated Writing Programs, and the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference Bakeless Prize since 1997.

Vazirani, a native of India, grew up in Maryland. ♣*

EMORY



Awkward photo by Tommy Leonardi