

vently as they do themselves and feel proud to sacrifice our men and money to save the honour of England?" she asks, with a touch of irony. Yet she hesitates to remark on the "exceptional courage and bravery" of "our sepoys," for fear of arousing suspicion of mutiny. Silent in the face of British condescension, she takes pride in women's *sati* and the sepoys' courage. Challenging colonial rule, she rejects the Orientalism of "occidentals" that dispossesses her people. "Of what nation are we then? Certainly we are not one with our rulers. We have not the rights of children of the soil that belong to us." Reflecting on her displaced identity, the narrator uses an image close to the No Man's Land that figures in so much fiction and poetry about the Western front. "We are, then, in the position of our mythological hero Harischandra's father Trisangu who could find no place either in heaven or on earth, and remained suspended in vacant space. So it is natural that occidentals should look upon our courage as reflected glory, and our loyalty and self-sacrifice as cringing, dog-like virtues!" (385). They have "no place," no nation. In a final twist, upon the announcement that the Indian troops have landed to acclaim in France, the narrator anticipates that "after the war is over, India will receive her just demands" (389). "Foreigners who appreciate" the self-sacrifice of these soldiers, she suggests, will oblige the English "mother-land" to recognize the Indian right to self-determination. Stories like Svarnakumari's expose the gendering of the subaltern, the incoherence of national identity, and the failed "war for human rights" that Kelly Miller traced in his history of the American Negro's war effort.

To understand this war as a world war, we must also look to the African fronts, whose literary record has scarcely been touched. Africa is a symbolic third figure both hidden and exploited by the dominant binary of the Entente opposed to the Central Powers. Already in 1915 W.E.B. Du Bois argued that Africa was at once the latent cause and vehicle of the war. The problem of the twentieth century was the color line: "Africa is a prime cause of this terrible overturning of civilization . . . in the Dark Continent are hidden the roots, not simply of war today but of the menace of wars to-morrow" (707). "Should you not discuss racial prejudice as a prime cause of the war?" he asked (712). After the Armistice, Du Bois concluded that world leaders' promises of democracy and equality had been betrayed both for African Americans, who faced lynching when they returned from military service, and for Africans, whose hopes of eventual independence were rejected at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919.

The grossly dichotomizing rhetoric of "us" and "them" that structured war poetry as well as propaganda deployed images of Africa either as the trophy to be won or as the barbarian to be overcome. Racism infected political discourse at every level. American propaganda, for example, attacked German *Kultur* and militarism as a gorilla raping Belgium. Symmetrically, German propaganda depicted as a monkey the "5th gorilla regiment, 1st replacement Battalion, Senegalese." While these posters implicitly denigrated Africans, both sides needed as well to affirm their own benevolence as colonial powers, whose proof was the reciprocal support from their colonies. A French photograph in *Illustration* showing a Camerounian king, Rey Bouba, "one of the best collaborators of France," with his men armed in "authentic medieval equipment," resembles a German photo-

graph showing exotically equipped “colored helpers” in German East Africa (Higonnet, “Teil” 107).

In these symmetrical imperialisms, as Roland Barthes argued in *Mythologies*, the image of the black soldier empties out history. The famous French poster of the young Negro in a French uniform “signifies . . . that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag” (116). The image, Barthes explains, is an alibi that steals speech in a “surreptitious faking” (123). It is that stolen speech that concerns me.

While other colonial allies of European powers have had little voice in our literary histories, Africans have had none. In addition to simple Eurocentrism, this omission has reflected the aesthetic dismissal of oral forms and paraliterary life-writing. Compounding these aesthetic priorities are difficulties of language: few Western comparatists know the languages of East Central Europe, and fewer know African languages like Chichewa. Thus we are dependent on oral historians and interviewers like Melvin Page, as well as on translators, for our materials.

Lacking a vocabulary for oral autobiography, Palmer and Wallis, the editors of *Intimate Voices from the First World War*, state that “no known African diaries of the conflict exist” (xv), to explain why they use an oral interview in their collection of intimate writings. Because we privilege written memory over oral memory, “the western front remains essentially Western” (Johnson 181-82). Palmer and Wallis print extensive passages from the 1914-1916 diaries of British officer Richard Meinertzhagen and German doctor Ludwig Deppe, riddled with racist attacks on “niggers” and “cowering” sepoys (Palmer 167-68). By contrast a few pages from Joe Opala’s transcript of a 1976 interview with the French Guinean soldier Kande Kamara trace Kamara’s decision to volunteer because “every slave who went to war would become a chief on return” (his response to French recruitment promises). Kamara hoped “If I die, I’ll die a man” (215). In fact he was called a “good boy” by the French. Even more than European footsoldiers, who often ask “Why war?”, Kamara insisted there was no explanation for his mobilization: “There was never any soldier in the camp who knew why we were fighting. There was no time to think about it. . . . The reason for war was never disclosed to any soldier. They didn’t tell us how they got into the war” (221). Orature is often repetitive, befitting the experience of war: “We just fought and fought until we got exhausted and died. Day and night, we fought, killed ourselves, the enemies and everybody else” (221). The detail buried in this repetitious list, “killed ourselves,” tacitly echoes the theme of suicide in Great War literature, as does the concept of masculinity as a goal to be achieved through death. That African killed African for a European master gives a troubling third meaning to the phrase.

The internal conflicts in the African experience of the war emerge through dialogue in other oral texts. A Bambara song published under the rubric of “folklore” in a government journal in 1917 uses call-and-response to voice a critique of the suffering incurred when the French repressed a Bamako insurrection in 1915. An old woman asks the rebel leader “I e tièou bla mini?/I e kélékè tiòu bla mini?” (“Where did you leave your men?/Where did you leave your warriors?” Riesz 199). Diossé, Bambara head of the canton Komi, who has blown himself up rather than surrender to the French, replies “Tarha toub,bou gninga;/I ka

tarha sordassiou gnininga;/I ka tarha kodiala danga filè” (“Go ask the whites;/ Go ask their soldiers;/and go see the shores of Kodiala without water” Riesz 199). The lamentation of the women accuses both the rebel leaders and the French of sacrificing men’s lives in vain.

Even an interview of a few pages may bear witness to psychological complexity and political insight, enabling elderly and illiterate Malawi women to make pungent comments. Gogo Dorothy Liwewe reported a recruitment that has been described as a new form of enslavement. “I heard there was war at Tukuyu, and so white men were capturing people in districts upland . . . [The men] did not want to go but they were captured and tied up in chains of *ukwambala* (palm leaf rope). And then they were put on a steamer and taken to Tukuyu” (Liwewe 320-21). When asked why there was war, Manamu Abiti Mbali offered a simple explanation: “People always fight for power. They were fighting for the world. It was who was to rule.” Abitisindo, another Malawi woman, replied “The war was declared by the governor at Zomba . . . Do you think I know why they fought? I went there to eat, that is all. This war was waged for Casson. Where is he? Why can’t you go and ask him?” Her replies cut across the implicit power dynamic of an interview. She responds to questions about salary and taxation with her own questions: “Are you not fighting for us people and is it not for the tax monies that you are fighting? Not for people” (323-24).

As a song about Karonga confirms, one way the subaltern responded to the war was to ask rebellious questions. Olivia Tambala’s lament was chanted at the end of the war when the few survivors from her village straggled back:

At Karonga
 People perished there, at Karonga
 Why did they perish?
 At Karonga
 People perished there, at
 Karonga
 Why did people perish
 At Karonga?
 Young men died there
 Why did people die? (556)

At key moments canonical texts also raise questions. But there is a special irony that springs from the divided identity of colonized peoples—and from the complex multilayered identities of women, as Trinh T Minh-Ha has laid out in *Woman, Native, Other*. Their irony may not always be legible. Paul Fussell believed that women were incapable of the “subtler” kinds of irony he found in the great British soldier poets (*Thank God* 137).

An example of such illegibility may be the first autobiographical African novel in French, Bakary Diallo’s *Force-Bonté* (1926), which recounts his experience as a Senegalese *tirailleur* (xi). Slightly fictionalized testimony, it has generally been rejected as a naïve or collaborationist hymn to France’s “mission” to “protect” Africa and as the antithesis of Lamine Senghor’s attack on “roi colonialisme” in *La violation d’un pays* (Diop 41-43; Midiohouan 149n). Here, too, there are covert ironies. Salient in Diallo’s first person account of his military service is the weight he devotes to combat on the Marne (6 out of 171 pages). Far more exten-

sive is his account of humiliations, mistreatment in military hospitals, and racist inequities of pay. After he was twice wounded in October 1914, his smashed jaw required thirteen operations to reconstruct his face, but he could not get soft food from a doctor who instead cursed him and threw him into prison in a dramatic confrontation. Similarly, long chapters detail his philosophic response to service in Morocco, where the desire for universal brotherhood conflicts with the duty to wage war and makes him ill (73).

In part autobiography, this text is also in part a philosophy of war. In the Moroccan sequence Diallo concludes that war is due to failures of communication, “les malentendus” (68). Just as earlier he was eager to learn Wolof, here he tries to converse with a Moroccan tea-merchant; later he will learn French and become an interpreter. Men are separated by languages, but he thinks them fundamentally the same in spite of “color” differences (35). The goal of communication impels Diallo to learn to write. In a telling scene, he recounts being punished for making lines on a white-washed wall while doing guard duty. This symbolic moment of defacement is tied to his indirect critique of the French. It is not Diallo but his friend Yera Ba who complains, “les Français sont trop orgueilleux, ils se croient supérieurs à tout le monde” (The French are too proud, they consider themselves superior to everyone” 78). Similarly he explains how hard it is to convey his experiences to his family without recounting divisive encounters that he prefers to leave out.

Si tu ne leur parlais que de ce que tu préfères sans dire vraiment et ouvertement les chicaneries, les mesquineries dont tu as été l'objet dans les administrations militaires, tes parents n'iraient-ils pas croire que tu ne les aimes plus . . . ? (153)

If you spoke to them only about what you prefer without stating truly and openly the chicanery and pettiness inflicted on you by military administrations, wouldn't your parents believe that you no longer love them?

Slyly, he attributes his critique of French “injustices militaires” (153) to his filial duty. But in order to preserve harmony self-censorship is his best option.

Although Diallo is proud of having passed from shepherd's crook to pen, he integrates oral story-telling into his narrative (noting his gestures) and uses the historical present to give his own voice more immediacy. In a passage printed as if it were a play, he records an exchange of animal fables that highlights the coexistence of orality and literacy. His friend Abdoul asks him to write down their stories:

—Bakary, tu pourras écrire sur le papier nos contes, que rien ne s'en échappe.

—Ne crains pas l'oubli. Nous avons, vous tous surtout, l'esprit comme un porte-plume, la tête comme un encrier, la mémoire comme l'encre et le cerveau comme du papier. (139-40)

—Bakary, you can write our stories on paper, so that nothing is lost.

—Don't be afraid of forgetting. We have, especially all of you, a mind like a penholder, a head like a pot of ink, memory like ink, and a brain like paper.

Diallo's equivalence between the oral and the written constitutes a plea for cultural equality.

These few examples begin to reveal what appears when we shift our map and allow the empire to speak back. Simple periodization is troubled by songs recorded belatedly in the 1970s, yet the power of oral memory transmits forcefully the songs and the resentments of the African women who served as carriers in

the white man's war. The oral form also troubles our assumptions about individual (and gendered) authorship. Even if we allow for gender assignments such as lamentation, and the power of the *griot*, oral forms like Olivia Tambala's song are communal. The song as shared legacy in turn tests the focus on individual authority and authenticity that has been so central to criticism of the literature of the Great War. Diallo's written testimony is a specifically African response to the European war text, with his overt self-censorship, his long-term encounter with the French military, and the oral exchanges he folds into the narrative as mini-performances.

These double-voiced texts are not modernist, but instead record encounters with modernity. They resist the divide between high and low, between educated elites and the avant-garde, on the one hand, and masses identified with mass-media, propaganda, and jingoism, on the other. They resist the distinction between male genres and female genres that has relegated women writers as non-combatants to ignorant sentiment and conventional forms. They resist the racial bias that has overlooked ironies in works that lie outside the canon.

Margaret R. Higonnet

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Why join the ACLA?

- We keep you informed about the latest developments in the discipline and the profession through our journal, *Comparative Literature*, the *ACLA Bulletin* (in the summer issue of *CL*), our website, and regular emails to the membership.
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MLA ANNUAL MEETING
December 2005, Washington, DC
ACLA SESSIONS

ACLA is sponsoring two panels at this year's MLA Convention in Washington, DC. If you will be attending the MLA convention, we hope that you will join us for these two comparative sessions as well as for our cash bar, shared with the School of Criticism and Theory. The topics, session organizers, and speakers are listed below. Please consult the MLA program for time and venues for all three of these ACLA-sponsored events.

Panel A.

“Human Rights as Comparative Discourse”

Chaired by Margaret R. Higonnet, University of Connecticut, Storrs

1. Simon Gikandi, Princeton University: “Exile and the Place of Theory”
2. Azade Seyhan, Bryn Mawr College: “German Scholarship in Istanbul Exile: The Imperative for Interdisciplinary Work”
3. Tobin Siebers, University of Michigan–Ann Arbor: “Disability and the Right to Have Rights”

Panel B.

“Comparative Literature, World Literature and the Undergraduate Curriculum”

Chaired by Caroline Eckhardt, Penn State University

1. Corinne Scheiner, Colorado College: “Comparative Literature for Undergraduates: Presenting the 2005 ADPCL Report on the Undergraduate Literature Curriculum”
2. Bella Brodzki, Sarah Lawrence College: “Comparative Literature by Any Other Name: Current Challenges in the Undergraduate Context”
3. David Damrosch, Columbia University: “Beyond English: Teaching with and Against Translation”

We look forward to seeing you at both sessions.

CALL FOR PAPERS: ACLA ANNUAL MEETING 2006
“THE HUMAN AND ITS OTHERS”
23-26 MARCH 2006, Princeton University
 Conference Website: *acla06@princeton.edu*

The American Comparative Literature Association’s 2006 Annual Meeting will take place at Princeton University on March 23-26, 2006 (Thursday Evening through Sunday noon). Hosted by the Department of Comparative Literature, along with other departments and programs in the humanities and the creative arts, the conference will focus on a central theme: “The Human and Its Others.”

What does it mean to be—or not be—“human”? In the long history of attempts to draw boundaries around the human, in efforts to define its mental, spiritual, physical, and linguistic particularities, as well as its ideals, its failures, and, in the view of some, its extinction in a “posthuman” era, literature has encountered almost every other discipline and domain of experience. It has also participated in the creation of a series of “others” against which—and whom—the human has defined and measured itself. Looking to literary examples and theoretical distinctions, to changes through time and through cultures, to explanations arising from modern technologies as well as from ancient myths, we will highlight a range of questions: How does literature, along with the other creative arts, help define the human? How do definitions differ according to time and place? How elastic is the idea of the human? How has it been shaped by religion, politics, philosophy, science, economics, medicine, and technology? Against what images, ideas, dreams, and nightmares has it been defined and refined? And why does it seem to be a particularly pertinent, if not pressing, concern for us today? The conference invites discussion of these various issues as they have helped create our sense of literature, the “humanities,” and, of course, the study of Comparative Literature.

The Conference Program Committee invites proposals for seminars on any topic falling under the conference title’s ample possibilities. The categories below provide some examples:

- Language and the Human • Keeping Time • Literature, the Arts, the Human
- Embodiment/Disembodiment • The Renaissance Individual • Literature and Human Rights • The Posthuman • Religion and the Human
- Space and Movement • The Language of Animals • Translation and Metamorphosis • Media and the Human • Gendering the Human
- The Invention of the Human • Cyborgs and Automata • Magic, Spirituality, and the Human • The Human and the Natural World • Endgames
- Philosophy, Literature, and the Human • Relativity and the Human
- The Humanistic Tradition • Monsters and Angels • Representing the “subject”

The ACLA's annual conferences have a distinctive structure in which most papers are grouped into twelve-person seminars that meet two hours per day for the three days of the conference to foster extended discussion. Some eight-person (or smaller) seminars meet just the first two days of the conference. This structure allows each participant to be a full member of one seminar, and to sample other seminars during the remaining time blocks. Previous conference programs that show this pattern are available online at <http://www.acla.org>. The conference also includes plenary sessions, a business meeting, a banquet, and other events.

Seminar proposals can be submitted via our online form. The submission deadline for seminar proposals is October 1, 2005. Proposals can be up to 250 words long. Seminars will be posted as they are accepted in October 2005. The deadline for individual paper proposals for these seminars is November 30, 2005.

MEMORIAL NOTICES 2004-05

ALFRED OWEN ALDRIDGE
December 16, 1915-January 29, 2005

A man of many facets and talents, A. Owen Aldridge will be remembered by some as a pioneer of colonial American literary studies, by others for his explorations in East-West literary relations, and by still others as a former president of the American Comparative Literature Association. He is credited with at least 17 book titles, starting with *[BENJAMIN] Franklin and his French Contemporaries* (1957), and including, among others, *Comparative Literature: Matter and Method* (1969), which many comparatists will recall as a text that introduced us to the systematic study of our discipline; *Early American Literature: A Comparatist Approach* (1982); *The Reemergence of World Literature: A Study of Asia and the West* (1986); and *The Dragon and the Eagle: The Presence of China in the American Enlightenment* (1993). His impact may be suggested by the fact that he was honored not once, but three times, with collections of work by his students, colleagues, and friends: *Deism, Masonry, and the Enlightenment: Essays Honoring Alfred Owen Aldridge* (1987); *Aesthetics and the Literature of Ideas: Essays in Honor of A. Owen Aldridge* (1990); and *Crosscurrents in the Literatures of Asia and the West: Essays in Honor of A. Owen Aldridge* (1997).

For many of us, however, A. Owen Aldridge will forever be remembered as the founder of the journal *Comparative Literature Studies*. He served as its editor from its opening issue in 1963 through 1986, and his name has continued at the top of the journal's masthead as editor emeritus since the first issue of 1987 (26.1). The journal also continues to be associated with him through the annual Aldridge Prize, a partnership in which an ACLA committee selects each year's best comparative essay by a graduate student, and *CLS* publishes the paper and provides a monetary award. Encouraging new scholarship in this way is perhaps the best memorial an academic could hope for—the living word. At the request of his surviving daughter, those wishing to remember A. Owen Aldridge may send donations to be used towards the Aldridge Prize (checks should be made payable to "Penn State University" and sent to The Editor, *Comparative Literature Studies*, 311 Burrowes Building, University Park, PA 16802, USA).

Professor Thomas Beebee
 Departments of Comparative Literature and
 Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures
 Penn State University

RENÉE RIESE HUBERT
July 2, 1916 - May 18, 2005

Renée Riese Hubert, professor of French and Comparative Literature who helped found graduate departments in those subjects at the University of California at Irvine, passed away on May 18, 2005. She was 89.

Professor Hubert worked most recently on the interplay between literature and painting. She published three books on the subject, including *Magnifying Mirrors: Women, Surrealism, and Partnership* (1994), and with her husband, Judd Hubert, *The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists Books* (1998). Professor Hubert also published a number of volumes of poetry in French. She will be fondly remembered by her colleagues and students in the University of California and beyond.

Professor Kathleen L. Komar
Departments of Comparative Literature and Germanic Languages
University of California–Los Angeles

RECOGNITION OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ACLA ENDOWMENTS

The ACLA wishes gratefully to acknowledge the generous contributions made this year to our three endowments, the Charles Bernheimer and the ACLA endowments. These funds, which honor the year's outstanding dissertation and fund graduate student travel to the annual meeting of the ACLA, assure and enhance the future of the field of Comparative Literature through our graduate students. Benefactors of the ACLA this year included:

To the Charles Bernheimer Endowment: Howard Bloch, David Damrosch, Michael Palencia-Roth.

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To the Graduate Student Travel Endowment: Jonathan Culler, Caroline Eckhardt, Dorothy Figueira, Gail Finney, Margaret Higonnet, Kathleen Komar, Françoise Lionnet, William Moebius, Michael Palencia-Roth, Yopie Prins, Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, Haun Saussy, Katie Trumpener, and Lois Zamora.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE PRIZES FOR 2005

The 2005 Harry Levin Prize

Those books eligible for the Levin Prize in 2005 emphasize literary history or criticism as opposed to theory; in the spirit of Comparative Literature, they are engaged with more than one national literature or with issues of literary study in general. The 2005 Levin Prize comprised books published in the triennium 2002-2004. The winner of the 2005 Harry Levin Prize is Seth Lerer, for his book *Error and the Academic Self: The Scholarly Imagination, Medieval to Modern* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

Announcing the 2006 René Wellek Prize:

The René Wellek Prize, given in alternate years with the Harry Levin Prize, is this country's most prestigious book award in the discipline of Comparative Lit-

erature. The Wellek Prize recognizes an outstanding work in the field of literary and cultural theory. Editions, collections of essays, and reference works are not eligible for these prizes. The 2006 Wellek Prize will comprise books published in the triennium 2005-2007.

Please consult the ACLA website for additional information about the competition at: <http://www.acla.org/levinandwellek.html>.

The A. Owen Aldridge Prize

The A. Owen Aldridge prize is awarded to the best graduate student essay selected from a competition. *Comparative Literature Studies*, at the Pennsylvania State University Press, publishes this annual prize-paper. The winning article also carries a monetary prize. The purpose of this competition is to encourage and recognize excellence in scholarship among graduate students and to reward the highest achievement by publication. This project is sponsored by *Comparative Literature Studies* in cooperation with the ACLA and supported by the Department of Comparative Literature at Penn State.

The winner of the 2005 A. Owen Aldridge prize was Katherine Manheimer (Yale University), for her paper "To the Letter: The Material Text as Space of Adjudication in Pope's First Satire of the Second Book of Horace." The prize committee for 2004-05 was: Verena Conley (Harvard University), Gail Finney (University of California-Davis), and Susan Homar (Universidad de Puerto Rico).

Graduate students are encouraged to submit a polished paper in English, approximately 15-20 pages long (double-spaced), following the MLA Style Manual, and prepared for anonymous evaluation. The deadline for the 2005 Aldridge prize competition was July 1, 2005. Further information on the Aldridge prize can be found at: <http://www.acla.org/aldridge.html>.

The Charles Bernheimer Prize

Each department or program in Comparative Literature in North America may nominate one dissertation completed during the current year (for the 2006 competition, a dissertation completed by July 1, 2005). The ACLA expects that the majority of dissertations nominated have been written by students enrolled in Comparative Literature, but a department or program may nominate a dissertation by a student enrolled in another program if it judges this the best dissertation in Comparative Literature of the year. The sponsoring department or program must be a current member of the ACLA.

The winner of the 2005 Bernheimer Prize was Shaden Tageldin (University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D. 2004) for her dissertation "Disarming Words: Reading (Post)Colonial Egypt's Double Bond to Europe." An honorable mention was also awarded to Jutta Maria Gsoels-Lorensen (Yale University) for her dissertation "Epitaphic Remembrance: Representing a Catastrophic Past in Second Generation Texts." The prize committee for 2004-05 was: Sally Lawall (University of Massachusetts-Amherst) and Katie Trumpener (Yale University).

To nominate a dissertation for the Bernheimer Prize, we ask you to notify the ACLA secretariat at info@acla.org of your nomination and to send copies of the dissertation directly to the judges. Nominators should submit a letter or report of one or two pages outlining the exceptional qualities of the nominated dissertation. Copies of the nominating letter should be sent, along with copies of the dissertation, to each member of the committee. For the 2005 Bernheimer Prize, copies must reach the judges by November 15, 2005. Further information on the Bernheimer prize can be found at: <http://www.acla.org/bernheimer.html>.

The Horst Frenz Prize

The Horst Frenz Prize is awarded to an outstanding paper presented by a graduate student at the annual meeting of the ACLA; the prize is awarded at the following year's conference. The Horst Frenz Prize consists of a \$250 gift certificate for books, a \$250 travel grant to attend the following ACLA conference to receive the award in person, and publication of the essay in the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*.

The winner of the 2005 Horst Frenz Prize was Geoffrey Baker (Rutgers University), for his paper "Empiricism and Empire: Orientalist Antiquing in Balzac's *Peau de chagrin*." The jury for the ACLA 2004 Conference at Penn State University was: Miriam Cooke (Duke University), Kathy Komar (University of California-Los Angeles), and Kevin Larsen (University of Wyoming).

Nominations of papers are encouraged from all Association members who participated in the annual meeting. The deadline for nominations was May 15, 2005. Further information on the Frenz prize can be found at: <http://www.acla.org/frenz.html>.

2005 HARRY LEVIN CITATION

Seth Lerer, *Error and the Academic Self: The Scholarly Imagination, Medieval to Modern* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)

Academics like to believe they are engaged in the pursuit of Truth. Seth Lerer's learned, brilliant, and often witty book *Error and the Academic Self: The Scholarly Imagination, Medieval to Modern* decisively directs our gaze away from the history of Truth to the unexpected: that we all, in the end, might be the heirs to a history of academic error, and—even worse—that we unwittingly continue to live in the academy by blunder. The academic and literary case histories that his *Error and the Academic Self* puts on display take the reader from the rhetoric of sublimity and salvation of Old English Studies to George Eliot's Causaubon—the master of Victorian philology—all the way to a genealogy of American rhetorical philology, from John Quincy Adams and Basil Gildersleeve to Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and Patricia Parker. True to its title, Lerer's study moves deftly between scholarly investigation and imaginative creation, bearing in the process on philology, rhetoric, fiction, politics and poetics, authorship and readership.

Proceeding from the claim that the academy is riddled with blunders, Lerer's passionate study nonetheless mounts a supple and surefooted argument about the force of error, errata, and errancy in the production, in print, of knowledge. It does so by returning to philology, a field once central but now marginal to literary curricula, and by bringing together a diverse but coherent array of texts from *Beowulf* to *Middlemarch* to *Mimesis*, from errata sheets and proofs to the thesaurus and the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Eminently bookish, Lerer's study is also a learned meditation on the role of error and accuracy, mistakes and corrections, the wrong and the right in the fraught and fractured interplays between the Academy and real life. In the course of making its case, Lerer's engaging book manages to meditate on the affective dimensions of scholarly life, whether dedicated to sublime philology or ardent etymologies.

For Lerer there can be no doubt that relationships among desire, discipline, pedagogy, and paternalism stand in the forefront of the profession of philology itself. Especially of note is Lerer's illuminating discussion of rhetorical philologists in nineteenth-century America, which is accompanied by a sustained reading of Eric Auerbach as European philologist in exile, who ended up sublimating his philological patrilineage into a vision of Lady Philology. In Lerer's hands, Auerbach's errancy, as he travels from Istanbul to Yale, via Penn State, becomes paradigmatic of the history of Comparative Literature in America. Fellow travelers in this history of error include René Wellek, whose story is itself really a narrative of the profession as a whole, and Paul de Man, whose work occupies a significant place in the longer history of rhetorical reading in America. Engaging till the very last, Lerer's book ends persuasively, that is, by convincing us that

the long lineage of these distinguished philologists, scholars, and theoreticians has helped to shape our own academic selves—and, not to forget, our own occasional errors.

Beatrice Hanssen, University of Georgia, Chair
Brad Epps, Harvard University
Yopie Prins, University of Michigan
Harry Levin Committee

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
January 1, 2004-December 31, 2004

ACCOUNTS

University of Texas Account: Balance Forward (01/01/04)	\$ 67,979.83
Income	\$ 46,249.02
Expenditures	- \$ 21,757.10
Transfers to Endowments	- \$ 23,073.00
Final Balance (12/31/04)	\$ 69,398.75

ACLA Investment Fund: Value (01/01/04)	\$ 26,021.37
Deposits (from UT Account and member donations)	\$ 5,748.00
Deposits (from donations in honor of Haskell M. Block)	\$ 6,975.00
Change in Value (excluding cash deposits)	\$ 2,371.83
Value (12/31/04)	\$ 41,116.20

Bernheimer Investment Fund: Balance Forward (01/01/04)	\$ 20,151.41
Deposits (from UT Account and member donations)	\$ 10,350.00
Change in Value (excluding cash deposits)	\$ 917.09
Final Balance (12/31/04)	\$ 31,418.50

University of Texas Contribution: Balance Forward (01/01/04)	\$ 0.00
Income	\$ 37,749.14
Expenses	- \$ 37,749.14
Final Balance (12/31/04)	\$ 0.00

ITEMIZED EXPENDITURES

Journal subscriptions	- \$ 10,380.80
ICLA yearly payment	- \$ 4,630.00
Prizes	\$ 1,000.00
Membership fees/dues	- \$ 990.00
Conferences	- \$ 1,017.25
Travel & Misc. Reimbursements	- \$ 454.35
Website	- \$ 479.40
Student subsidies (travel grants)	- \$ 2,250.00
Office expenses	- \$ 39.47
Bank/Credit Card fees	- \$ 515.83
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	- \$ 21,757.10

TOTAL ASSETS (01/01/04)	\$114,152.61
TOTAL ASSETS (12/31/04)	\$141,993.45
NET CHANGE	\$ 27,850.84

Respectfully submitted by
Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, Secretary-Treasurer
Susan Harwood Kaczmarczik, ACLA Administrative Assistant