

Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers
Twenty-first Annual Conference
October 26-29, 2017 at the University of Dallas

Call for Papers

The Program Committee for the 2017 Conference:

Richard Rankin Russell, Baylor University
Ernest Suarez, Catholic University of America
Meg Tyler, Boston University

Please note: everybody who participates must be a current member of the ALSCW. We encourage participation by creative writers, scholars, critics, and secondary school teachers. The 2017 introductory membership rate for new members, graduate students, and retirees is \$50. Renewals are \$100. Visit our website for detailed information (alscw.org).

Proposals of 300 words and a C.V. should be sent as email attachments to Richard Rankin Russell at <Richard_Russell@baylor.edu> on or before June 10, 2017.

Seminars

1. Ireland and Minor Theatre

Moderator: Scott Boltwood, Emory and Henry College

This seminar will explore Irish theatre in its relation to theatre in the broader Anglophone world. We wish to examine this position of Irish theatre by considering how an individual play reveals the relationship between a “minor” artistic tradition and those in countries with more heralded theatrical traditions. Papers exploring the stature of Irish plays or playwrights on the English or American stage, the internationalization of Irishness, the relation of Irish theatre to other national theatres in the former colonies are especially welcome.

2. Teaching Introductory Literature

Moderator: Jennifer Formichelli, Boston University Academy

This seminar solicits papers on the teaching of introductory English literature from high school and college English instructors. The seminar will focus on practical pedagogical strategies, experiences, and reflections from the classroom. Papers describing the teaching of specific works of introductory literature, aspects and strategies for teaching different genres (novels, plays,

poems), styles (lyric, sonnet, epic), and periods, along with those emphasizing successful classroom practices and experiences, are welcomed.

3. Epigrams, Aphorisms and Riddles: Wit and Mystery

Moderator: Connie Voisine, New Mexico State University

*What is an epigram? A dwarfish whole,
Its body brevity, and wit its soul.*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Forms of poetry cycle in and out of fashion, and it is fair to say that riddle poems, aphorisms and epigrams are perhaps antiquarian in interest. Recall the pleasures of Oscar Wilde's epigrams, admire the work of the seemingly lone contemporary aphorist, James Richardson or of the still glittering Anglo Saxon riddle poems: there are many good reasons for a revival. This seminar will explore the particular powers of these forms in a variety of languages, including those of compression, wit, and mystery. Some other discussions might include the importance of solution to the riddle poem, the tonal complexities of the epigram (A drop of venom, a little bit of gall./Lacking these, my friend, your epigrams lack all. —Martial), the koan qualities of the aphorism, and how each of these forms has at its heart a balancing of a linguistic focus with a conceptual one.

4. Reading Joyce in the Twenty-First Century

Moderator: Anne Fogarty, University College, Dublin

Many Joycean anniversaries have been celebrated in the twenty-first century so far including the centenary of Bloomsday in 2004 and the centenaries of the publications of *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 2014 and in 2016 and the 75th anniversary of the publication of *Finnegans Wake* in 2014. Rather than peaking as many had predicted, interest in Joyce's revolutionary work shows no sign of abating. Papers reflecting on the perennial fascination with his works are invited as well as presentations opening up new perspectives on topics such as Joyce and the everyday, Joyce and contemporary culture, Joyce and the reader, and Joyce and tradition.

5. Bob Dylan and Poetic Song Verse

Moderators: Mike Mattison, Tedeschi Trucks Band, and Ernest Suarez, Catholic University of America

Literary anthologies sometimes include Bob Dylan or other songwriters, but treat them as "add-ons" or as "popular poets." This seminar invites consideration of what we identify as a relatively new literary genre—*Poetic Song Verse*—that began to emerge in the late 1950s and flourished in the 1960s and after with Bob Dylan, Gil Scott-Heron, and others for whom lyrics are primary and who use voice and instrumentation to foreground their lyric practices.

We invite papers that explore this relatively new form of verse composition through close readings that consider the relationship between verse, voice, and instrumentation in one or more works. What are the origins of Poetic Song Verse, what are its conventions, its legacy, and its cultural impact?

6. Traumatic Memory and Its Representation in African Literature

Moderator: Ernest Cole, Hope College

Over the past 10 years, writers from historically fraught societies in Africa have been focusing on traumatic memory and its representation in war narratives. These writers through various genres have been using literature to engage the legacies of trauma, its representation, effect on society, and treatment. While literature has been the main avenue for engaging memories of distress and fracture, film and the arts have also provided another vehicle of exploration. Women writers, especially Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie, Aminatta Forna, and Yvonne Vera, have used war narratives to explore post-traumatic stress disorders, its cultural resonance, representation, and the possibilities for healing in war-torn societies in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe. Recent literature, film, and the arts from other parts of Africa as the DR Congo and South Africa have also exposed this theme. This seminar would investigate the effects of trauma individually and collectively on such societies and would explore possibilities of healing and reconciliation through narrative, film, and artistic performance. The seminar invites papers that explore the healing potential of narrative and imagination in various forms.

7. Shakespeare in the K-12 Classroom

Moderator: Diana Senechal, New York City

When you teach William Shakespeare's work to elementary, middle, or high school students, what do you seek to bring out of the texts, and how do you do so? Papers should pose a question about a Shakespeare text, look into the text itself, and explore ways of doing the same in the classroom. Through examining the texts themselves, we will draw out pedagogical possibilities. For example, a paper could analyze the symmetry and hierarchy of conflict in the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet*—and then describe a stage blocking activity that highlights this structure and serves as a prelude to class discussion. The initial proposal should be 300 words long; the final paper, no longer than ten pages. Past, current, and future teachers of Shakespeare at all K-12 levels, as well as writers, scholars, and others, are encouraged to submit proposals.

8. What Poetry Documents

Moderator: Erika Meitner, Virginia Tech

This seminar seeks to provide a forum for the discussion of the rising trend of documentary technique among America's contemporary poets. Part documentary, part imagination, investigative docu-poetry incorporates a variety of data and reportage into the poem—including photos and other images, testimonials, interviews, facts and figures—in order to explore the conditions of contemporary culture or historical events. This form allows poets to wrangle with complex personal, political and historical questions around power, exploitation, appropriation, erasure, and the nature of language itself. Papers from practicing poets about techniques, ethical

considerations, use of hybrid or mixed-genre forms, or issues arising in their own projects and practices are welcome, as are papers from scholars on published work of contemporary American poets in the form.

9. *In Memoriam* Derek Walcott: The Short Poems

Moderators: Andrew Osborn and Eileen Gregory, University of Dallas

Although Walcott may be best known for his narrative long poems, especially *Omeros*, he is equally a master of short lyric poems, characterized, like the longer poems, by formal excellence and experimentation and by his dense, highly charged language. We invite seminar papers on individual short poems, sets of poems, or lyric sequences that seek to articulate Walcott's distinctiveness as a lyric poet of enduring quality.

10. The Aesthetics of Greek and Roman Historical Writing

Moderator: Sarah Brown Ferrario, Catholic University of America

The historical writing of ancient Greece and Rome sought not only to record and inform, but also to persuade, move, and entertain. Rhetoric, symbolism, visual description, and purposeful interactions with other genres (for example, oratory, drama, and satire), to name only a few features, invite us to consider ancient historical writing as a rich repository of literary art. This seminar will embrace a range of both Greek and Roman authors from Herodotus and his predecessors down through late antiquity. Potential topics might include (but are certainly not limited to) prefaces; speeches; geographical and ethnographic excursions; the "pose" of objectivity; the construction of narrative personae; characterization; generic self-consciousness; and the reception of other authors, both within and outside of the historical realm.

11. The Difference Translation Makes

Moderator: Will Waters, Boston University

The difference translation makes has everywhere been a prime mover of the literary imagination as well as its product. Literature is made of other literature, and this "other literature" inevitably turns out to include, at whatever depth, works written in other languages. This seminar invites papers on any aspect of literary translation, ideally offering attentive readings of individual texts along with a broader view of implications and connections beyond them. Possible topics could include, but are not limited to, striking instances of literary translation, the relationships among varieties of translation, the theme of translation within literary writing, the circulation of translations in any era or place and their effects, the effect of certain translations' *not* being made or circulated in some places or times as opposed to others, the temporality of translation (for example, the time elapsing between a work's composition and its life in translation; the odd way translations always go out of date while their source texts do not).

12. Slow Reading

Moderator: David Mikics, University of Houston

For this seminar on slow reading topics might include: re-reading; the role of pleasure in reading, and the forms of readerly enjoyment; what makes a favorite book; reading as escape and as antithesis to worldly bustle; reading as a contemplative passion, as a way of working through one's experience, as conversation with a book, as self-therapy, and as a way of thinking. The session will focus on encounters with particular books, rather than abstract theories.

13. Dream, Vision, and History in Neoclassical and Romantic Literature

Moderator: Steven Stryer, University of Dallas

Proposals for papers are invited on dreaming and visionary experience within poetry and prose of the English Neoclassical and Romantic periods (defined roughly as works written between 1688 and 1832). For all the striking changes in literary form and subject matter over the length of this period, writers from Addison and Pope through De Quincey and Coleridge share a reliance on the dream and vision as modes and motifs—whether considered separately, or joined together within the genre of dream-vision which writers inherited from their medieval predecessors. Among their other uses, the dream and vision are often employed as ways of treating history, since they allow writers to reflect on the relationship between the present moment and the rest of time—whether extending forward in prophecy or backwards in historical retrospect. All papers loosely intersecting with these questions will be considered.

Plenary Panels:

(All are filled at this time)

Plenary Panel 1: Homer

Jeff Fish, Baylor University

Speakers: Erwin Cook, Trinity University; Peter McDonald, Oxford University; Jonathan Ready, Indiana University

Plenary Panel 2: Shakespeare for our Times

Chair, TBA

Speakers: Sheila Cavanagh, Emory University; Cynthia Lewis, Davidson College; Peter Holland, University of Notre Dame; Scott Crider, University of Dallas

This panel explores the relationship between Shakespeare's work and our times.

Plenary Panel 3: Literary Editing

Moderator: Archie Burnett, Boston University

Speakers: TBA

This plenary panel will address aspects of editing literary texts such as: principles of editorial decisions about the text and contextual annotation, problems and solutions, and individual case histories.

Plenary Panel 4: The Harlem Renaissance and the Blues

Moderator: Coretta Pittman, Baylor University

Speakers: TBA

Events:

1. An Evening of Readings, Thursday, October 26th

At 5 pm we will open the program with poetry readings by ALSCW members. If you would like to read your verse, please notify us at <Richard_russell@baylor.edu >.

2. Plenary Poetry Readings

Kwame Dawes, Chancellor's Professor of English and Glenna Luschei Editor of *Prairie Schooner*, University of Nebraska, Thursday, October 26, 7:30 P.M.

Peter McDonald, Christopher Tower Student of Poetry, Oxford University, Friday, October 27, 7:30 P.M.

Sir Andrew Motion, Homewood Professor of the Arts, Johns Hopkins University (former Poet Laureate of Britain), Friday, October 27, following Peter McDonald

3. Banquet, October 28th

Dramatic performance from James Joyce's fiction: Matt Spangler, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, San Jose State University

Speaker: Christopher Ricks, William M. and Sara B. Warren Professor of the Humanities, Editorial Institute, Boston University, "Bob Dylan and the Nobel Prize"

ALSCW Mission Statement:

The Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers seeks to promote excellence in literary criticism and scholarship, and works to ensure that literature thrives in both scholarly and creative environments. We encourage the reading and writing of literature, criticism, and scholarship, as well as wide-ranging discussions among those committed to the reading and study of literary works.