AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

SYMPOSIUM:
GOD AND THE AMERICAN WRITER

February 26-28, 2015
Sheraton Gunter Hotel
205 E. Houston St.
San Antonio, TX 78205
Ph. 210-227-3241

Co-Directors:
Steven Frye, California State University Bakersfield
Eric Carl Link, University of Memphis
Jeanne Campbell Reesman, University of Texas at San Antonio
The American Literature Association is a coalition of societies devoted to the study of American authors.

For further information, see the web site at http://www.americanliteratureassociation.org

Or contact the Executive Director:
Professor Alfred Bendixen
American Literature Association
Department of English
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544
ab23@princeton.edu

Upcoming ALA Events:

ALA 26th Annual Conference
May 21-25, 2015
The Westin Copley Place
10 Huntington Ave.
Boston, MA 02116
Conference Director:
Professor Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University
carr@georgiasouthern.edu

ALA Fall Symposium: The City in American Literature
September 10-12, 2015
Hotel Monteleone
214 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA
Conference Director
Professor Leslie Petty, Rhodes College
petty@rhodes.edu

The Board of Directors of the ALA and the Symposium Co-Directors would like to offer special thanks to Dr. Dan Gelo, Dean, College of Liberal and Fine Arts, University of Texas at San Antonio, for his generous co-sponsorship of this Symposium on God and the American Writer.
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Jeanne Campbell Reesman, University of Texas at San Antonio
Thursday, February 26, 2015

3:00-5:00 p.m.
Symposium Registration Table Open
Pick up Programs, Nametags, Information
_Alamo Foyer_

Shawn Keeney, University of Texas at San Antonio
John Reesman, Trinity University

5:00-7:00 p.m.
Opening Fiesta Reception
_Alamo Foyer_

Friday, February 27, 2015

7:15-8:45 a.m.
Coffee and Tea
_Alamo Foyer_

7:15-8:45 a.m.
Symposium Registration Table Open
Pick up Programs, Nametags, Information
_Alamo Foyer_

SESSION I
8:00-9:20 a.m.
A. Frontier Room
Post-911 Literature
Chair: Calvin Hoovestol, University of Texas at San Antonio
1. “Survivalism and the American Jeremiad: James Welsey Rawles’s Survivors: A Novel of the Coming Collapse,” Brittany Henry, Rice University

2. “‘Dry-Humping for the Lord’: Religious Fervor Not Enfleshed in Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk,” Julie Ooms, Missouri Baptist University

3. “‘Just Give Me That Horrible Saturday’: Ritualizing Banality in the 9/11 Novel,” David Morris, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

4. “‘I am not here’: The Invisible God as Humanism in Don DeLillo’s Falling Man,” Xialin Ding, Nanjing Agricultural and Technical University

B. Quadrangle Room

Nathaniel Hawthorne I

Chair: Debra Peña, University of Texas at San Antonio

1. “Face to Face with the Infinite: Human and Divine Beings in Play in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s ‘The Minister’s Black Veil’ and ‘The Man of Adamant,’” Linda Sahmadi, University of Nice Sophia Antipolis


3. “The Varieties of The Scarlet Letter: Hawthorne’s Antebellum Call for Pragmatism in Religious and Political Speech,” David Razor, Brandeis University

C. Alamo Room

Cormac McCarthy I: Blood Meridian and the Divine (Cormac McCarthy Society)

Chair: Steven Frye, California State University, Bakersfield

1. “Dismantling the Western, Deconstructing God: the Apotheosis of Violence in Blood Meridian,” Jamie Brummer, University of Memphis

2. “‘Where is God’: Presence and Absence in Blood Meridian,” Wallis R. Sanborn III, Our Lady of the Lake University

3. “‘Days of Begging, Days of Theft’: The Philosophy of Work in Blood Meridian,” James W. Christie, University of Warwick
D. Everett Room

Writing Race and Transcendence: Three Genres

Chair: Janet Holtman, Shawnee State University

1. “Historical Discourse and Transcendence: Edward P. Jones’s *The Known World,*” Janet Holtman, Shawnee State University


3. “’Inspire my Song’: Faith, Gender, and Colonialism in the Poetry of Phillis Wheatley,” Kasie McCreary-Leightenheimer, Shawnee State University

SESSION II
9:30-10:50 a.m.

A. Frontier

Puritans

Kim Whitehead, Mississippi University for Women

1. “The Contract: Providential Capitalism and the *Mayflower Compact,***” Ian Green, CUNY Graduate Center

2. “Fatherly Love: Puritan Attitudes toward Children as Seen in Cotton Mather’s ‘Some Special Points, Relating to the Education of my Children,’” Anna Genneken, Texas Woman’s University

3. Influence: “*Benito Cereno’s* Ending and Calvinism: An Examination of the Interconnections Between God, Biopower, and Citizenry,” Melissa Murata, SUNY Albany

B. Quadrangle

“In What Can We Not Believe?”

Chair: Judie Newman, University of Nottingham
1. “David Foster Wallace: Post-Modern/Post-Secular,” Shannon Minifie, Queens University

2. “It Ought to Drive Us Out of Our Minds: Religious Enthusiasm as a Model for Literary Study in Donna Tartt’s The Secret History,” Eric Fortier, University of Massachusetts, Amherst


C. Alamo

Roundtable Discussion: The Current State of C19 Studies

Moderator: Claudia Stokes, Trinity University

Participants: Dawn Coleman, University of Tennessee
Tracey Fessenden, Arizona State University
Toni Wall Jaudon, Hendrix College
Abram Van Engen, Washington University

D. Everett

Popular Fiction: Then and Now

Chair: Bonnie Lyons, University of Texas at San Antonio

1. “Roanoke: Cooper’s Equestrian Identity,” Matthew Guzman, University of Nebraska

2. “Bending Heaven’s Bars: Narratives of Imprisonment in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps’s The Gates Ajar,” Joshua Leavitt, The Ohio State University

3. “‘The Truth, whatever it is, is strange’ (Saul Bellow) from Gnostic Longings to Biblical Theism: a 20th-Century American Spiritual Journey,” Gloria Cronin, Brigham Young University

4. “What’s Scary about Carrie? Humans Playing God in Stephen King’s Debut Novel,” Shawn Keeney, University of Texas at San Antonio
SESSION III
11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

A. Frontier

Emerson: God, Mind, and Praxis

Kenyon Gradert, Washington University

1. "Emerson’s Puritan Abolitionism: Kenyon Gradert, Washington University


3. “Reception: Emerson’s Religious Instinct,” Peter Balaam, Carleton College

4. “The Open Elitism of Emerson and Whitman’s American Religion,” Michael Healy, The Graduate Center, CUNY

B. Quadrangle

Lyric and Theology

Chair: Miriam Marty Clark, Auburn University

1. “Psalm Drift and Scattered Parts: Lyric and Time in Charles Wright’s ‘Disjecta Membra’ and Jean Valentine’s ‘Lucy,’” Miriam Marty Clark, Auburn University


3. “Myself--the Term Between’: The Illusory Self and Hiddenness in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson and Jane Hirshfield,” Kim Whitehead, Mississippi University for Women

C. Alamo

Jack London as Naturalist

Chair: Allen Josephs, University of West Florida

1. “Is God Really Dead?: Interrogating the Atheist Figure in Jack London’s The Sea-Wolf,” Gina Rossetti, Saint Xavier University
2. “God without God, Elohim without Yahweh: Ecclesiastes, the American Writer, and Jack London’s The Sea-Wolf,” Dustin Faulstick, Missouri Southern State University


D. Everett

Modernism and Post-Modernism

Chair: Paul Ardoin, University of Texas at San Antonio

1. “Art of the Walk: Discovery of Self and Spirituality through Walking Meditation in 36 Views of Mount Fuji and A Walker in the City,” Stephanie Ball, Texas Woman’s University

2. “Jewish ‘Diasporic’ Humor in the Work of Larry David, Woody Allen, Nathan Englander, and Shalom Auslander,” Roberta Rosenberg, Christopher Newport University


4. “‘Words and Stories are Time Beings’: Buddhism and Storytelling in Ruth Ozeki’s ‘A Tale for the Time Being,’” Maureen McKnight, Cardinal Stritch University

**SESSION IV**

12:30-1:40

Symposium Luncheon
Robert Johnson Room

Keynote: “Moby-Dick and Twentieth-First Century Theodicy”
Jonathan Cook, Middlebury Academy, Sterling, VA

Introduced by Eric Carl Link, University of Memphis
SESSION V
1:50-3:10 p.m.

A. Frontier

Ecocriticism

Chair: Matthew Guzman, University of Nebraska


3. “Catholic Canonization in Environmental Justice Movements in Ana Castillo’s So Far From God,” Mike Lemon, Texas Tech University


B. Quadrangle

Postmodernism

Chair: Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University

1. “God’s Ghost in Nabokov’s Poetic Potustoronnost,” Calvin Hoovestol, University of Texas at San Antonio

2. “Relationality Incarnadined: Faith Traditions and Form in Mary Szybist’s Incarnadine,” Benjamin Blackhurst, Brigham Young University

3. “Auster, Author, God, and ‘God’: City of Glass as a Strategic Move,” Lori Newcomb, Wayne State College

C. Alamo

Poetry Reading: “God, Are You Listening?”
Bonnie Lyons and Enedina Casarez Vasquez

Introduced by Jeanne Campbell Reesman, University of Texas at San Antonio
D. Everett

Hawthorne II

Chair: Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

1. “‘My Bible, my prayers, my Heaven’: Religious Isolation and Community in Hawthorne’s ‘The Man of Adamant,’” James Moore, Texas Woman’s University

2. “‘The Subject had Reference to Secret Sin’: Catholic Imagery in Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales*,” Cynthia Murillo, Tennessee State University

3. “Sacred Beauty: Hawthorne, Typology, and American Literary Aesthetics,” Sarah Buchmeier, University of Illinois at Chicago

**SESSION VI**

3:20-6:30 p.m.

A. Showing of Terence Malick’s “The Tree of Life” (2011) (139 minutes)

(Intermission of 10 minutes)

Informance by Stacey Peebles, Centre College (30 minutes)

Introduced by Steven Frye, California State University-Bakersfield

*Alamo*

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**Saturday, February 28, 2015**

7:15-8:45 a.m.

Coffee and Tea

*Alamo*

7:15-8:45 a.m.

Symposium Registration Table Open

Pick up Programs, Nametags, Information

*Alamo*
SESSION VII
8:00-9:20 a.m.

A. Frontier

Flannery O’Connor I (Flannery O’Connor Society)

Chair: Robert Donahoo, Sam Houston State University

1. “‘Today I have proved myself a glutton’: Glutton in ‘The Lame Shall Enter First,’” Monica C. Miller, Georgia Institute of Technology


B. Quadrangle

African American Literature

Chair: Gina Rossetti, Saint Xavier University

1. “‘I sense more than I can say’: Nathan A. Scott, Jr., and the Theological Apprenticeship of Ralph Ellison,” M. Cooper Harriss, Indiana University

2. “‘He Hated the Evil that Lived in His Body’: The Black Pentecostal Church and the Internalization of White Hegemonic Values in Baldwin’s Go Tell It on the Mountain,” Nic Duron, New York University

3. “Rewriting Crucifixion: The Jesus Figure in Toni Morrison’s Paradise and Tar Baby,” Aurélia Mouzet, University of Missouri-Columbia and University of Paris Ouest La Défense Nanterre

C. Alamo

Transgressive Pieties: Religious Feeling Across the Borders of Body and Nation in Antebellum U. S. Literature

Chair: Tracy Fessenden, Arizona State University

2. Rethinking Disability in the Sentimental Novel,” Claudia Stokes, Trinity University


D. Everett

New England

Chair: Joshua Leavitt, The Ohio State University

1. “‘God’s Eternal Ways’: Phillis Wheatley and the ‘Angelic Train,’” Anne Beebe, University of Texas at Tyler

2. “Secular Saints in the Nineteenth-Century Moral Market: Fern, Alcott, Alger, and Twain Following in Franklin’s Footsteps,” J. D. Isip, Collin College


4. “‘No Clouds of Glory’: Katherine Paterson’s Prodigal Children,” Caren J. Town, Georgia Southern University

SESSION VIII
9:30-10:50 a.m.

A. Frontier

Anne Bradstreet and Others

Chair: Melissa Murata, SUNY Albany

1. “‘But Why Compare?’: Negotiating Divine and Marital Translation in Bradstreet and Dickinson,” Anne G. Myles, University of Northern Iowa

2. “Authorial and Spiritual Negotiations in Anne Bradstreet and Phillis Wheatley: God, Grief, and Women Readers,” Eileen Razzari Elrod, Santa Clara University
3. "From Heaven Our Home to Earth as Paradise: the Spiritual Journey of Anne Bradstreet, Emily Dickinson, and Adrienne Rich," Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate School

B. Quadrangle

Flannery O’Connor: Violence and Grace

Chair: Fiona McWilliam, University of Texas at San Antonio

1. “Grace and the Grotesque: The Catholic Use of Violence in Flannery O’Connor and Martin Scorsese,” Thomas Bevilacqua, Florida State University

2. “God’s Violent Grace in Flannery O’Connor’s ‘A Good Man is Hard to Find,’” Ira Halpern, University of Toronto

3. “Flannery O’Connor’s Sacred Spaces,” Janet M. Black, Colorado Christian University

C. Alamo

“Above the American Renaissance”

Chair: Harold K. Bush, St. Louis University

1. “Melville and Stowe, Above and Below the American Renaissance: Two American Spiritual Poets,” Brian Yothers, University of Texas at El Paso

2. “The ‘angel’ is not’ing more dan de shark well gobern’: Dialect and Dialogism in Fleece’s Sermon to the Sharks in Moby-Dick,” J. Laurence Cohen, Emory University

3. “I have no jailer but my own conscious: E. D. E. N. Southworth’s Response to Anti-Catholic Fiction of the 1830s and 1850s,” Pamela T. Washington, University of Central Oklahoma

4. “God the Friendly Ghost: Plotting the Afterlife in Spiritualist Novels,” Karen Tracey, University of Northern Iowa
D. Everett

Cormac McCarthy II: Novels and Plays (Cormac McCarthy Society)

Chair: Stacey Peebles, Centre College

1. “McCarthy’s The Road and The Sunset Limited: Post-secular Rumination or Post-Christian Dilemma?” David Deacon, University College, Dublin

2. “If it looked like a thing he practiced many times it was’: The Practice of Fate in the Novels of Cormac McCarthy,” Quinn Toonan, Cape Fear Community College

3. “‘I think if you were satan . . .’: Cormac McCarthy, Holes in Heaven, and the Search for Ethics in Great Plains Literature,” Steven Zani, Lamar University

SESSION IX
11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

A. Frontier

Latina/o Studies

Chair: Debra Peña, University of Texas at San Antonio

1. “The Search for God in Rudolfo Anaya’s Bless Me Ultima and Tomás Rivera’s . . . y no se lo tragó la tierra. . . And the Earth Did Not Devour Him,” Andres López, Texas State University

2. “A Portrait of the Atheist as a Young Man in Tomás Rivera’s . . . And the Earth Did Not Devour Him,” Mark Hama, Angelo State University

3. ”. . . tell his daughter truths’: The Boundaries of God in Loida Maritza Perez’s Geographies of Home,” Helane Adams Androne, Miami University of Ohio

B. Quadrangle

Transcendentalists

Chair: Peter Balaam, Carleton College

1. “Sympathetic vs. Spiritual Influence in Emerson’s Representative Man and Factory Women’s Writings,” Meghan Wadle, Southern Methodist University
2. “‘What have Concord and Merrimac to do with Boodh?’: Collapsing Literary and Religious Categories in Thoreau’s A Week,” Tyler Gardner, University of Notre Dame

3. “‘A Mere Transcendentalist’: Tenets of Transcendentalism in E.D.E.N. Southworth’s Vivia,” Rose Neal, Swansea University, Wales

C. Alamo

Sacrament and Social Justice

Chair: Shawn Keeney, University of Texas at San Antonio

1. “‘Outside the Mystery’: Post-Secular Approaches to Sacrament in Gilead,” Grace Miller, University of Minnesota

2. “‘Our Comrade Christ’: Competing Christologies in the Literature of Capital and Labor,” Andrew Ball, Lindenwood University


D. Everett

True Louisiana

Chair: Linda Kornasky, Angelo State University

1. “Nickel Plated Angels: Huck Finn and Rust Cohle,” Julia Whitfield, University of Texas at San Antonio

2. “Religion, Regionalism, and Empire in George Washington Cable’s The Grandissimes,” AnaMaria Seglie, Rice University

3. “Have We Like Sheep Gone Astray?: The Recuperative Power of Ritual in Andre Dubus’s ‘A Father’s Story,’” Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University

4. “God and the (dis)abled American Writer: Andre Dubus’ Disability Aesthetic,” Andrea Ivanov-Craig, Azusa Pacific University
SESSION X
12:30-1:40 p.m.

Symposium Luncheon
Robert Johnson Room

Keynote: “Mark Twain, Horror, & Theodicy”
Harold K. Bush, St. Louis University

Introduced by Jeanne Campbell Reesman, University of Texas at San Antonio

SESSION XI
1:50-3:10 p.m.

A. Frontier

Flannery O’Connor II: Some Literary Connections (Flannery O’Connor Society)

Chair: Robert Donahoo, Sam Houston State University

1. “O’Connor, Joyce Carol Oates, and Religious Violence,” Thomas Haddox, University of Tennessee, Knoxville


3. ”O’Connor, Faulkner, and Penitential Suffering,” John Sykes, Wingate University

B. Quadrangle

Whitman and Dickinson

Chair: Quinn Tooman, Cape Fear Community College

1. “Whitman’s Sexual-Spiritual Union in His New American Bible: ‘Whoever You Are Holding Me Now In Hand,’ ‘It,’ and Camaraderie Between Men,” E. Marin Smith, California State University, San Luis Obispo

2. “Between Heavenly Father and Earthly Father: Emily Dickinson’s Fathers’ Laws,” Harrison F. Dietzman, University of Iowa

3. “The Face as Icon in Three American Poets,” Eileen Gregory, University of Dallas
C. Alamo

Drama

Chair: James W. Christie, University of Warwick

1. “Born of One God and Country, Enslaved Amongst the Other: The Muslim Counteroffer in Royall Tyler’s The Algerine Captive,” Stephanie Laszik, University of Texas at Tyler

2. “’Making a Killing’: Arthur Miller’s Critique of Franklinian Business Practice in All My Sons,” Stephen Bell, Liberty University


D. Everett

Media and Markets

Chair: David Deacon, University College, Dublin

1. “A Lord and His Lady: The Influential Marian Musings of a Movie-Crazed American Catholic,” Adrienne Nock Ambrose, University of the Incarnate Word

2. “God, the Middlebrow, and the 1922 Bookman,” Windy Counsell Petrie, Colorado Christian University

3. “Boy Inventors and Jewish Giants: Biblical Legends in Nineteenth-Century Technocratic Dime Novels,” Nathaniel Williams, University of California, Davis


SESSION XII
3:20-4:40 p.m.

A. Frontier

New Perspectives on Southern Literature

Chair: Steven Zani, Lamar University
1. “The Stubborn Fraction: Twain, Religion, and Pain,” Cynthia J. Davis, University of South Carolina

2. “‘Better to wake up after all’: Secularism in Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening,*” Linda Kornasky, Angelo State University

2. “‘Until Godalmighty Should Give Her a Sign’: Testimony as Redemption in Caroline Miller’s *Lamb in His Bosom,*” Debra D. Peña, University of Texas at San Antonio

3. “Accepting the Inexplicable: the Relationship between Style and Content in Tony Earley’s ‘The Prophet from Jupiter,’” Anne Shepard, Texas State University

B. *Quadrangle*

New England Poets Then and Now

Chair: Wallis Sanborn, Our Lady of the Lake University

1. “The Place of Sympathy in Michael Wigglesworth’s *The Day of Doom,*” Katherine Campbell, University of California, Santa Barbara

2. “Gods and Angels in Mary Oliver’s *Blue,*” Doni M. Wilson, Houston Baptist University

3. “American Religion in Mary Oliver’s *American Primitive,*” Nancy Van Arsdale, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

C. *Alamo*

East, West and Midwest

Chair: Stacey Peebles, Centre College

1. “'No Goddam Sunday School Picnic’: Grace and Redemption in *Plainsong* by Kent Haruf,” Sara S. Hodson, Huntington Library

2. “Religion in Midwestern Fiction,” Nancy Bunge, Michigan State University


D. Everett

**Faulkner and Hemingway**

Chair: Allen Josephs, University of West Florida

1. “‘And him in the pulpit cursing God’: Usurped Pulpits and Spatial Authority in Faulkner’s *Light in August,*” Matthew Smalley, University of Kansas

2. “‘You’d almost think there was some purpose to it’: Scapegoating in Faulkner’s *Sanctuary,*” Jordan Carson, Baylor University

3. “The Significance of a Religious Pilgrimage in *The Sun Also Rises,*” Sheila Nielsen, Georgia Southern University

**5:00-7:00 p.m.**

*Closing Buffet Reception*
*Cash Bar*
*Alamo Foyer*

**Symposium Notes:**