



Biblio-Notes

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Notes from the Chair



(Photograph provided by Karen Munro)

We've had our first two days of spring-like weather here in Portland, and it's possible (though still hard) to believe that more is on the way. I know some of us are still deep in winter, while others have been under blue skies for a while now. Before we know it we'll be meeting again in Chicago, and wrapping up another year's worth of LES business.

It's been a busy year so far! Last month over 80 LES members met in Seattle, WA for ACRL's bi-annual national conference, which was a tremendous success. Faye Christenberry organized a LES tour of Rem Koolhaas's central public library building, which is one of the country's most fascinating and challenging library spaces. Behind the scenes, Juliet Kerico and I worked hard on the first ACRL Conference Planning Green Committee, helping to reduce waste and raise awareness of the environmental impact of our meetings. And many more of us enjoyed the conference's

rich programming, including keynote speakers Sherman Alexie and Ira Glass, and sessions on topics such as liberal arts scholarly repositories, open access journals in the humanities, and the future of literacy.

Kathy Johnson and the Planning Committee have now finished the work of finessing our bylaws into governance procedures, which will allow us to operate more nimbly in future. Visit the LES wiki at <http://literaturesinenglish.pbwiki.com>, where you'll find the governance procedures posted. Many thanks to Vince Graziano and the Publications Committee for continuing to maintain and update the LES wiki, Web site, and blog! And if you haven't friended LES on Facebook yet, now's your chance! The LES Membership Committee recently created a social network for literature librarians.

We continue to reach out to our colleagues in the Modern Language Association (MLA), first with a proposal to create a Libraries and Academia Discussion Group at MLA, and eventually (we hope) with a separate proposal for a formal liaison relationship between LES and the MLA. The ball is rolling on the first item, and we have a fall deadline to submit a proposal for the second project. Look for more word about this on LES-L and on the blog and wiki.

For those coming to Annual conference in Chicago, there's plenty to look forward to! Angela Courtney and others are working on a terrific panel session for the LES program on digitization programs in the humanities,

which will be held on Saturday afternoon. Separately, David Oberhelman and a special ad hoc committee are exploring our options for a LES tour of one of Chicago's many superlative literature libraries.

All of our committees are doing great work in support of our mission and our diverse, challenging, and ever-changing roles as literature librarians. In troubled times like these, our community of practice is more important than ever. I encourage everyone to find a way to be involved in LES. Send a question or an answer to LES-L, volunteer for a committee, put your name in the hat to be a mentor or a mentee, or write a post for the blog. Although we're geographically far-flung, we have many ways to stay close-knit and help each other stay upbeat, motivated, and engaged for years to come.

In expectation of continued greatness,

Karen Munro, LES Chair 2008-2009
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LES-L: Join in the Discussion



The purpose of LES-L is to provide a forum for discussion relevant to the acquisition, organization, and use of information sources related to the study and teaching of literature written in English from around the world. Recent discussion topics have included whether to weed long-standing series that go unused in favor of online sources; publishers and publishing practices; and popular fiction collections. Open positions and professional development opportunities are also announced on the list from time to time. Faced with a difficult reference question?

Ask for assistance from your LES colleagues. Finally, LES-L serves as the primary venue for members to announce activities, meetings, and programs at ALA Annual and Midwinter.

To subscribe to LES-L, send an e-mail message to sympa@ala.org from the address you want to subscribe to the list. In the subject line of your message, type in: **subscribe LES-L Firstname Name** (using your own first name and name). **Leave the message body blank.** Alternatively, subscribe via the Internet at <http://lists.ala.org/www/info/les-l>. If you have any problems, please feel free to contact LES-L Discussion List Moderator, Liorah Golomb liorah.golomb@wichita.edu.

Welcome New Members!

LES is pleased to welcome two new members to the field. Note their vast interests and backgrounds!



(Photograph provided by Julianne Buchsbaum)

Greetings LES Members! I'd like to introduce myself to those of you whom I have not yet had the pleasure to meet. I was hired in August of 2008 at the University of Kansas as the Humanities Librarian for English Language and Literature. Soon after, I volunteered to take on the departments of Philosophy and Classics. My position entails doing instruction, liaison and outreach work with the English, Philosophy, and Classics Departments, selection and development of materials for library collections in the areas of English,

Philosophy, and Classics, serving on various library committees, working at the reference desk, helping students with research questions, and so on. Just this past fall I completed a PhD in Literature from the University of Missouri-Columbia. I earned my MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh, my MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and my BA in Philosophy and Classics from Beloit College. I have published two books of poetry: *Slowly, Slowly, Horses* (Ausable Press, 2001) and *A Little Night Comes* (Del Sol Press, 2005). In my spare time, I like to read, write poetry, paint, draw, play guitar, walk my dog, and exercise.

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(Photograph provided by Roberto Delgadillo)

Hello, my name is Roberto C. Delgadillo. I was hired as the new subject bibliographer for Literatures in English at the University of California, Davis last year. I'm also the bibliographer for Education, Chicana/o Studies, Religious Studies and Military Science. Originally from Managua, Nicaragua, my family moved to Los Angeles in the 1980s. I earned a BA in Modern German and Russian History from UC Santa Cruz, and a MLIS and a PhD in Modern Latin American History, both from UCLA. My research interests include civil military relations and the information-seeking behavior of undergraduate and graduate students. For the past several years I've worked as a reference and acquisitions librarian in the Hispanic Services Division of the Inglewood Public Library and as a cataloguer with the Beverly Hills Public

Library. Currently, I'm working on a project to measure the information seeking behavior of graduate students in the School of Education, a research paper focusing on us/them dichotomies that exist among Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, and a selected bibliography/subject guide of print materials for Borderlands Studies at UC Davis.

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LES Bylaws Morph into LES Governance Procedures

LES Bylaws have officially become LES Governance Procedures this year. A couple of years ago, ACRL notified all of the Sections that bylaws are only necessary for ACRL, but not for individual Sections, because ACRL as a whole has legal responsibility for the Division's finances. Without the legal need for bylaws, the Sections could become more nimble. ACRL provided the following explanation of the benefits to LES and other ACRL units of this change to governance procedures:

“In the 2008 election, members voted to approve the proposal for Sections and other “communities of practice” to operate with governance procedures instead of bylaws. According to the ACRL Bylaws, Article XV, Section 3 (Communities of Practice), “each community of practice shall establish written procedures related to its function and governance that shall be adopted by the membership of the group. A current copy shall be provided to the

Executive Director.” By replacing the more formal bylaws with these governance procedures, Sections can revise the documentation that guides their Section’s structure without the lengthy timeline connected to election ballots.”

ACRL provided a template for moving the Bylaws over into Governance Procedures. LES Planning Committee members Diana Chlebek, Erica Clay, Frank Gravier, Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, Kathy Johnson, and enthusiastic and valuable friends Marta Brunner, Chad Curtis, Kathleen Kluegel, and Elisabeth Pankl, worked hard on recasting the Bylaws into Governance Procedures. We hope that members of LES will use these governance procedures and propose changes when necessary. They are posted on the LES wiki <http://literaturesinenglish.pbwiki.com/LES-Governance-Procedures> and also on the LES Web site.

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Life as a Humanities Librarian



Some days I might as well cuss like a sailor’s parrot when I discuss my research interests because of the stunned silence with which I’m sometimes greeted. I work at a pleasant campus located along the Bible Belt in Huntsville, Texas. That belt is meant to keep the pants up on America, and in the process of my research I yank down America’s pants to investigate that which wasn’t intended to see light. As a tenure-track librarian at Sam Houston State University, I must publish, and I choose to write about pornography and erotica:

pornography in the library, pornography in videogames, pornography in literature and culture. Wherever there is pornography or erotica, I am interested in writing about it.

There are three camps of reaction I’ve noted. The first is shock and disgust, typically by women. Perhaps because I don’t make a qualifying statement about, or in, my research, such as pornography is morally corrupt or damaging towards women. The other reaction is of leering interest, typically by men. Some men suddenly lean in a little closer, saying, “Oh, really? How interesting,” with a slight raise of the eyebrow. The third camp of reaction is where friends, most colleagues, and family fall—polite or real interest and general acceptance.

My subject interest began because of a book I purchased for my collection area in Literature entitled *Eleven Thousand Rods* by Guillaume Apollinaire. We have twenty of his other titles, but at the time none of his fiction. It turned out that *ETR* was indeed the ‘uncensored erotic classic’ as the glossy cover proclaimed. A patron soon complained about the sexually graphic passages and the book was handed back covered in yellow sticky tabs to mark said offending passages.

Among my reasoning for purchasing *ETR* is the fact that my library’s goal is to “Encourage the intellectual development of...students and faculty through access to the record of human experience.” Pornography and erotica are records of the human experience. While my library doesn’t purchase pornography and has limited erotic texts, I’m an advocate for collecting this material because it is part of the American culture whether we like it or not, and in order to understand the human

experience, we must understand the whole picture—not the family-friendly version.

In the process of discussing the book challenge of Apollinaire's *Eleven Thousand Rods* with my colleagues, I declared I would become the Dirty Librarian: the librarian who ordered erotic fiction, classical, modern, and otherwise for my personal collection; the librarian who would also read said items and be able to converse intelligently upon them (and I do blog on occasion), and perhaps the librarian who would make a career of writing about and discussing pornography and erotica.

After the incident with *ETR*, I'm less likely to order sexually explicit material for my library's collection, unless the material is needed, requested by faculty, or considered essential by scholarly reviewers; instead I make a list of titles I learn about on review slips to order them for my own collection at some point. In the meantime, *Eleven Thousand Rods* remains on the shelf at its appropriate call number; I continue on my research path with support from my library's director and most of my colleagues; and, I weather the jokes and mostly good-natured ribbing from other faculty. My ultimate research goal is to explore humanity's social and sexual evolution, shedding a little bit more light on those parts of America, and even the world, that don't often see sunshine, not in an attempt to shock but in order to understand.

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Tech Tips



RSS Feeds for the Literature Selector

If you follow the LES Blog—or any other blog, for that matter—you're probably already aware of RSS, also known as Really Simple Syndication. (Or Rich Site Summary, depending on whom you ask.) RSS provides an efficient way to keep up with frequently updated Web sites, such as news sites or blogs or even academic journals. It works like this: a Web site publishes an RSS “feed,” usually signaled by a button that reads “RSS” or “XML” or includes a small graphic that looks like this: . You can then subscribe to the feed using a feed reader, such as Bloglines (www.bloglines.com) or Google Reader (www.google.com/reader). Once you've subscribed, you'll get all the updates to the sites you follow in one place instead of having to visit lots of different sites. Among other things, RSS can be a powerful current-awareness tool. A number of journal publishers have begun offering RSS feeds for scholarly and professional journals, making it possible for new articles from the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* or *Library Journal* to come to you so you don't have to remember to look for them.

As a brand-new selector for English, I've found RSS feeds for a variety of journals in my subject area. But I've also been experimenting with using RSS to track new offerings from publishers. Not all publishers announce their latest publications via RSS, but a few have noticed the trend. Harvard University Press (www.hup.harvard.edu/rss) has new book feeds for a wide variety of subjects, including literature and literary criticism. The University of Chicago Press (www.press.uchicago.edu/rss), Wiley (www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-302565.html) and the University of

Michigan Press (www.press.umich.edu/rss) also have sets of feeds organized by discipline. Routledge's literature area (www.routledgeliterature.com) has a feed for new book titles and another for literature-related articles from the journals it publishes. Broadview Press (www.broadviewpress.com) and Yale University Press (yalepress.yale.edu) offer single feeds for all of their new books.

For those who don't mind a little tinkering, there are a few "roll your own" solutions for sites that don't publish a feed. Page2RSS (page2rss.com) and Feedity (feedity.com) can both create a feed that displays the most recent updates to any Web page. It's handy, but not always perfect: sometimes updates to a page can consist of a single image change or a rewritten paragraph. For those who are already comfortable with RSS and really like to tinker, Yahoo! Pipes (pipes.yahoo.com) offers a way to combine, sort, and filter multiple RSS feeds into customized streams of information.

Many book and periodical publishers also offer email alerts for current awareness. The choice of email or RSS is a matter of personal preference. I prefer RSS because I like being able to aggregate all my new information in one place, and because I get too much email already. Whichever method you like best, it's always useful to know what your options are for staying on top of the constant flood of new publications.

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MLA Connection

Indexing for the MLAIB

How would you go about advising a class of sophomores to find articles on "same sex bonds" in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*? The first thing I did was to come up with some better terminology, including "friends," "siblings," and "sisters" (sisters obviously being a key relationship in Austen's life as well as in her works). The next thing I did was turn to the wonderful Thesaurus which is included in the MLAIB database. There I found that "friendship" suggested a broader term, "human relations," which in turn exploded into a huge list of *kinds* of relations, such as "business relations," "class relations," "extramarital relations," and – lo and behold – "female-female relations" and "male-male relations." How very precisely what we were looking for! A search for those two descriptors didn't turn up anything in connection with *Persuasion* but did produce no fewer than seven articles relating to Jane Austen. Not bad!

Better acquaintance with the Thesaurus is just one of several benefits I have gotten from working as an indexer for the Modern Language Association. Not the least has been intensive exposure to current scholarship in various aspects of literatures in English through examining journals such as *Browning and His Circle*, plus a chance to practice my French with journals such as *Études Anglaises* and *Études Irlandaises*. Indexing certainly does hone one's analytical thinking as one tries to distill the essence of an article and express it as precisely as possible with a minimum of descriptor terms. The example I gave above demonstrates how indexing skills can

benefit one's consultation and library instruction sessions. In addition, I experience the satisfaction of serving the broader world of academe while adding the activity to my *curriculum vitae* and a grateful letter from the Association to my personnel file.

For me personally the indexing has led to an invitation to serve on the MLAIB Advisory Committee, which involves an annual meeting at MLA headquarters in New York City. I found it very gratifying to meet not only the other scholars on the committee but also a number of the professional indexers who work for the *Bibliography*. It's nice to know the folks who are amending and revising my humble input! By the way, although Barbara Chen, the editor in chief, always makes herself available to librarians at ALA conferences, please feel free to contact me about any issues or ideas you would like me to convey to the Advisory Committee.

To be honest I should mention the main drawback to indexing, which is obviously the time factor. It can take hours, many hours, just to extract the main ideas from a few articles and then more time to decide on the most appropriate descriptor terms. Before I began contributing to the MLAIB, I spent a few years indexing for ABELL (*Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature*). The editor, Bruce Sajdak, used to refer to the never-ending editorial burden as a sort of constant companion, which he called Hillyard, "the Golden Chain of Bibliography." On the whole, it's been fun and rewarding to be one little link in that chain.

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Look for more LES topics on the LES Blog and electronic version of *Biblio-Notes!*

Newsletter contributions welcome. The editor especially encourages those who may not be able to travel to ALA meetings to contribute descriptions of new books of interest, essays on "My Life as a Humanities Librarian," "My Favorite Reference Tool," "Tech Tips," and "Personal and Institutional News." Deadlines for copy are roughly the end of September and the end of March of each year. Please contact the editor for the exact deadlines of specific issues.

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