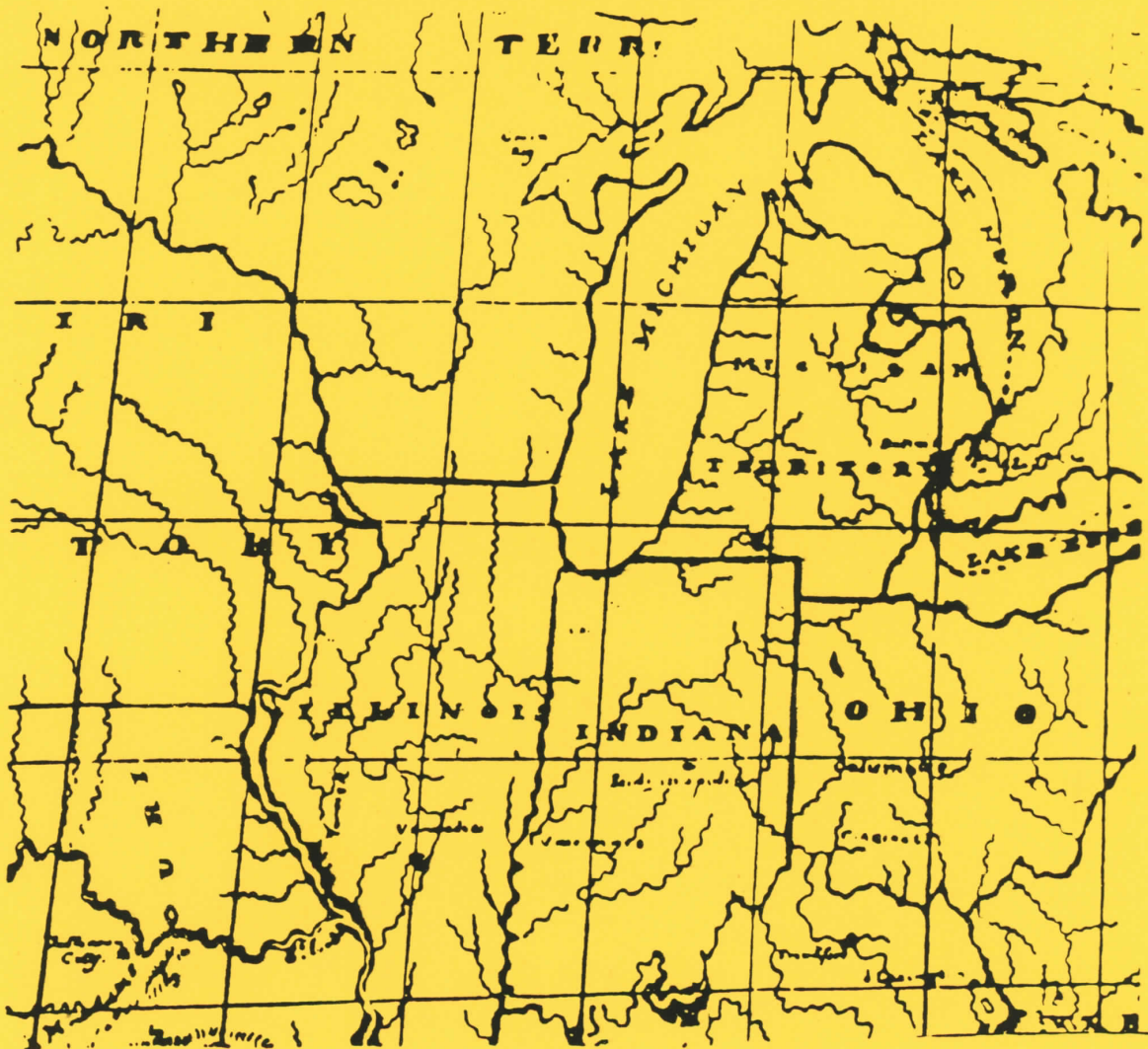


# §ML Newsletter



The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

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In Memoriam, Russel B. Nye  
1913-1993

Russel B. Nye, Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus at Michigan State University, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1945, founding member of the American Studies Association, the Popular Culture Association, and the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, and recipient of the MidAmerica Award in 1978, died in a Lansing, Michigan, hospital after a long illness.

To define Russ's contributions to scholarship, to teaching, to students, both graduate and undergraduate, to the profession of letter, and to the countless scholars of all descriptions who sought him out for information, encouragement, and conversation requires the biography that will surely be written. Each of his dozen books is a major contribution to America studies: George Bancroft, Brahmin Rebel (1944) was praised by Howard Mumford Jones in The New York Times Book Review and awarded the Pulitzer Prize; Fettered Freedom (1947), Civil Liberty and Slavery (1948), and Midwestern Progressive Politics (1951) are major assessments and interpretations of the American nineteenth century; A Baker's Dozen (1956), The Cultural Life of the New Nation (1960) and This Almost Chosen People (1966) are each a major contribution to understanding America as a people as well as a nation; The Unembarrassed Muse (1970) and Society and Culture in America (1974) are major studies that epitomize his wide ranging curiosity, his sharp insights, his disciplined analysis, his remarkable ability to synthesize. Of his wide-ranging interests, he said in 1970, "You never know when you'll find something of interest or importance or just plain fun."

Russ was born in Viola, Wisconsin, on February 17, 1913; he received his A.B. from Oberlin College in 1934 and his M.A. in 1935 and Ph.D. in 1939 from the University of Wisconsin, where he studied under Harry Hayden Clark. He came to Michigan State University, then M.S.C., in 1940; he chaired the Department of English from 1946 to 1959, during which he vigorously defended his faculty from accusations and innuendoes during the McCarthy era and demonstrated a remarkable ability to cut, transcend, or ignore administrative red tape.

Russ is survived by his wife Kathryn, to whom he was married on August 6, 1938, by his son Peter, daughter-in-law Ann Marie, and granddaughter Taylor. Funeral services were private; he is buried in Viola, Wisconsin.

To have known Russ, to have been his student, his colleague, and his friend, to have been able to learn from him and with him, was a privilege that has taught me much about scholarship, about teaching, about the responsibility that each of us has to the life of the mind and profession of which we are a part. Russ once jokingly called me "Harry Hayden Clark's grandson," a man whom I never knew, but I knew what Russ meant. I hope, in turn, my students, my younger colleagues, members of the Society, realize that, whether they know it or not, each is, in that same sense, Russel Nye's grandchild and that each will carry on in the tradition that Russ upheld, enhanced, and handed on.

David D. Anderson



From a Midwest Notebook  
William Thomas

Neighbors

Mr. Everett's farm adjoined ours on the north, but his house was on the other side of the road, back a long lane. My father, eminently practical, did not like long lanes, and I too could perceive how it put Mr. Everett at a disadvantage: it was too great a distance from the house to the river. He was a devoted fisherman, and was often to be seen, carrying several cane poles and always wearing rubber boots, following the bend to a likely spot where perhaps he had for several days baited the carp with bits of dough or grains of corn. He always used dough-balls on the hook and seemed able to catch fish any time he wished to. This was mysterious to me, whose hook no fish would attach itself to, whether it were baited with dough, worm, or craw-dad. So I gave up fishing early in life, and inclined to the view of a professor of English whom I later met that The Complete Angler is a delightful book but fishing a very overrated sport. Mr. Everett, who probably never heard of Izaak Walton, knew nothing of the sporting angler's scorn of the carp--an unreasonable prejudice, for a carp properly prepared is as savory as the cat--and would bring us sometimes a handsome seven-or eight-pounder, when he had caught more than his family could eat.

Mr. Everett was withal a man of wide and varied experience, for it was hardly possible to mention a subject which he did not hold an opinion on or to speak of a phase of human endeavor that his knowledge or experience did not touch; his personal narratives were interminable, and if you asked him a question as lucid as "What is this shrub that grows along the fence-row?" you might hear about a Texas horse race of 1896 or what Leadville was like in its boom before you got the answer--if the answer came. The subject he was unwilling to discourse on was how to catch fish: that was his secret, and his implied view was that it might remain to the rest of the world a mystery. Being a countryman, he would have not truck with fly-casting or any sort of artificial baits; the Scioto had only carp and catfish in it, anyway, no game fish, and if you had talked of fishing as a "sport", he would scarcely have understood. Yet for many years it was, I dare say, his principal interest in life, not second even to his farming. (It is easy to understand why my father did not think highly of Mr. Everett as a farmer.)

My earliest associations were with the Riders. Their house, to which belonged fifty acres, was easy to reach--you had only to climb a couple of fences, and there you were. That the house was very old was evident, for in central Ohio a log house was an oddity at the beginning of this century. This was a "settler's cabin", built of big hewn logs and chinked with mortar, and had some time been plastered inside. Its doors scraped on their sills, and its floor rippled, and it was exactly the sort of house you would expect the Riders to live in, and they were exactly the people you would find living in it.

I was at the Riders' a great deal. Eddie and Arthur were young men, with young men's interests and activities, but Perry was not so old as to find me uncompanionable. He seemed to have a special liking for me, and when I was not at the Rider house Perry was likely to be at ours, and I know we had happy times together, though I cannot remember anything we did. The Riders were also fishermen, but their fishing was more varied than Mr. Everett's. In summer they kept trot lines set nearly all the time, and used a seine. And every now and then, when I went to their house, one of them would lead me to a barrel and show me a big turtle.

The Rider family moved away in 1911, and, though their new home was only a mile off, Perry was lost to me as a companion. At the age of five one might permissibly go two hundred yards to make a visit but not a mile.



## II Country Sundays

Where I like to go on a Sunday was with my mother in the buggy to her mother's house—"over home", she called it. My grandmother always welcomed us heartily, and I liked my beautiful young aunt, Louise, and there were an orchard and farm buildings to explore. My father rarely went with us, although no overt reason existed for his refraining. My grandmother, I think, had no favorites among her sons-in-law, but my father, the oldest and most successful, must have suited her well enough; he omitted to go because he preferred to remain at ease.

But these visits, every three or four weeks in good weather during my earliest childhood, became less frequent with changes in my grandmother's household, and oftener than not we stayed Sunday afternoons at home. My father, exhausted from six days' labor, usually wished only to sleep or rest. I might amuse myself with the Doré-illustrated bible or the stereoscope; or with a panoramic box, a series of biblical pictures in color on a long sheet wound on rollers, which were turned by a hand-crank; but such pastimes soon palled. We had a music box, which played with metal discs (a glassed picture on the inside of its lid showed fat, naked little boys singing); and, as it was in the bedroom over the parlor, I was at a liberty to close the door and play it any time I wished; but I was weary of its tinkling tunes and set it going only for someone to whom it was a novelty. Later, after I had gone to school and become avid for new knowledge, I would sometimes read for an hour or so in back issues of The Technical World; and then, discouraged at finding this periodical inadequate to my purpose, would set off to the river or on my bicycle to see my chum, and he and I would probably go to the gravel pit and search for skulls and thigh bones of Indians.

My mother might play the piano, which she seldom did any other day than Sunday. But first she would have to adjust the stool, for she assumed I had turned it to an improper height, whether I had or not. It was adjustable by a screw, like a jack screw, which had the most offensive squeak I have ever heard. Why she, who later accustomed herself to handling wrenches, hammers, and oil cans, did not oil it, I cannot explain, unless she feared dropping oil on the rug; rather I suspect disinclination to perform a simple task which could be omitted. The compositions she played were melancholy in the extreme or her tempo made them so. "After the Ball", "Hello Central, Give me Heaven," "My Sweetheart Went Down With the Ship" (inspired by the sinking of the Titanic), "The Burning Iroquois (not a reference to Algonquin cruelty but in commemoration of the Chicago theater fire of 1903); "reveries" and "meditations", like "Whisperings of the Pines", "Echoes from the Woodland", "Heart's Sorrow" and "Beautiful Evening Star"; or "moonlight" pieces—if not "Moonlight on the Hudson", it would be on the Wabash or the Missouri or any other river whose name was not downright cacophonous. It did not matter whether they had words or not, for we never sang.

Hamlin Garland, whose family did sing, remarks in A Son of the Middle Border that nearly all the ballads which the McClintocks loved to sing were sad. But they were folk ballads, or literary ballads so familiar as to be in effect the same; the sentimental pieces my mother played were sophisticated and insincere, as I then in some way recognized. Her playing them expressed the unhappiness she could not allow herself to put into words; and there was no one who might understand the words had she been able to utter them.

## III The Amateur

After I discovered, I think in my fourteenth year, the vast world contained and described in magazines, advertisers' free booklets and catalogs, and similar depositories of the printed word, the coming of the mail carrier was the important event of the day; if he did not leave a thick envelopeful of "big mail" in the box for me, it was likely that I would receive at least a catalog or a folder or "literature" of some sort which I had sent for, without obligation and absolutely free. They were responsive unanimously and almost to a fault: the sporting goods manufacturers, the body builders, the correspondence art schools, the educational book publishers. They did not suspect how little money I had to expend for

their products or services, and sometimes I felt a bit guilty as I observed the mounting stack of this sumptuous and costly printed matter—knowing that, even though I might have my money back if I were dissatisfied after a ten-day trial, I must let their generous offers go unheeded.

When necessary, however, I managed to procure a new fielder's glove from Spalding or Goldsmiths or a Ty Cobb bat from A. J. Reach. The stamp, coin, and curio dealers pictured tangible merchandise without fanfare, and I had many bargains from them for sums like fifteen, twenty-five, and sixty cents. My correspondents among the Lone Scouts of America sent me copper ore from Michigan and petrified wood from Arizona, and I acquired fine arrowheads from dealers and from my local friends. I made snapshots with my Number 2 folding Brownie, developed the film, and printed the pictures. I had an intellectual life too: into a personal notebook I copied striking passages from Emerson and other philosophers, proverbs "from the Arabian", and pieces of verse like "The Day Is Done" and "Bedouin Love-Song", both of which I thought marvelous poetry.

Obviously this life of the spirit and these connoisseur's tastes could not be shared with everyone, and in practice I found they could not be shared satisfactorily with anyone. I wondered sometimes if there were another human being like me on the whole wide earth.

Ohio State University/Marion  
Emeritus



Mark Twain in England  
David D. Anderson

During his lifetime and in many respects even yet Mark Twain's England was considered to be that of The Prince and the Pauper (1882) of sixteenth-century England and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889) of a millennium earlier, an England in which romanticism and chivalry are laid bare for his fellow Americans to ridicule and reject from their realistic perspective of the late nineteenth-century America which had also rejected its own romanticism through The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885).

But both The Prince and the Pauper and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court reflect another dimension of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn often noted in the latter but almost invariably overlooked in both of the former works. This is the fact that in his novels set in England as in those set in his own Midwestern Mississippi River Valley, Twain was attacking not place nor people, nor traditions, but ideas, and, for the thirty-five years of his life from 1872 to 1907, his adult personal relationship with England was as deep and fulfilling in reality as was that with the Mississippi Valley of his youth in the memories that created Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Life on the Mississippi. In his letters from England and in the extensive fragments from his projected but never published book on England, the record of that relationship is as clear as that of his memory of his youth transmitted into the art that continues to direct the course of American fiction as we approach the twenty-first century.

During the thirty-five years between his first trip to England in 1872 and his last in 1907, Mark Twain visited England seven times in addition to his trip around the world in 1895 and his extended stays in Europe in 1891-95, principally in Germany and France, and in 1903-04 in Italy. His initial visit, for two-and-a-half months between August and November, 1872, to a great extent set the tone for the totally unexpected and long relationship that was to follow. His remorse after the death of his two-year-old son Langdon in June of that year, for which he blamed himself, his growing irritation with the literary pirates of England, one of whom had even published an original "original collection" of Twain's humor that he had never seen before, his desire to write a book in the mode of The Innocents Abroad to do critical justice to the English and their institutions, and perhaps his interest in arranging a lecture tour combined to motivate what he anticipated would be a gloomy trip. Leaving Livy and the newly-born Susan behind, he sailed alone for England on August 21st.

He landed in Liverpool and took the train to London, and, although he later wrote that his "first hour in England was an hour of delight, of rapture and ecstasy" and in his first letter to Livy he wrote parenthetically that "...I would rather live in England than America—which is treason," his initial experience on the train, which he later delighted in recounting, seemed to confirm not only the gloom he had brought with him, but his awareness of his alien nature and his preconception of the English as a people devoid of a sense of humor.

As he recounted the affair, almost immediately after he entered his compartment, he noted that a gentleman already seated was solemnly absorbed in a green-cloth-bound volume. Intrigued, Twain watched, and he became even more intrigued when he noted the title: it was the English edition of The Innocents Abroad, volume one. Twain settled back to watch, convinced that at any moment the man's sober demeanor would give way to laughter. He waited and watched and nothing happened to disturb the man's rapt attention. Finally, disgustedly convinced that the man must be taking everything he read seriously, he spent the rest of the trip in an atmosphere as gloomy as he expected to find in England.

In London, almost immediately, however, Twain became the literary lion to the English that he was to remain for the rest of his life. He was taken up by writers as diverse as Robert Browning, Charles Reade, and Henry M. Stanley; he was feted at dinners at the Savage Club,

the Whitefriars Club, the Sheriffs of London, and, on November 9th, at the Lord Mayor's. Although Moncure D. Conway, who reported the Savage Club dinner for the Cincinnati Commercial, described Twain as "tall, thin, grave, with something of the look of a young divinity student fallen among worldlings," throughout his remarks Twain lived up to his audience's expectations. Of the club itself, he said,

...I suppose that the customary thing for a stranger to do when he stands here is to make a pun on the name of this club, under the impression that he is the first man that the idea has occurred to. It is a credit to our human nature—not a blemish upon it; for it shows that underlying all our depraved (and God knows, and you know, we are depraved enough) and all our sophistication, and untarnished by them there is a sweet germ of innocence and simplicity still. When a stranger says to me, with a glow of inspiration in his eye, some gentle innocuous little thing about "Twain" and "one flesh," and all that sort of thing, I don't try to crush that man into the earth—no. I feel like saying: "Let me take you by the hand, sir; let me embrace you; I have not heard that pun for weeks." We will deal in palpable puns. We will call parties named "King" Your Majesty, and we will say to the Smiths that we think we have heard that name before somewhere. Such is human nature. We cannot alter this. It is God that made us so for some good and wise purpose. Let us not repine. But though I may seem strange, may seem eccentric, I mean to refrain from punning upon the name of this club, thought I could make a very good one if I had time to think about it—a week (69-70).

Much of the rest of the speech is devoted to his impressions of England, and each observation has its own barb, delicately but unsubtly imbedded. "I go about as in a dream—as in a realm of enchantment" he rhapsodized, and then turned to the sources of that enchantment. Of Leicester Square and Hyde Park, he said,

...Hour after hour I stand—I stand spellbound, as it were—and gaze upon the statuary. . . . I visit the mortuary effigies of noble old Henry VIII, and Judge Jeffries, and the preserved gorilla, and try to make up my mind which of my ancestors I admire the most. I go to that matchless Hyde Park and drive all around it, and then I start to enter it at the Marble Arch—and—am induced to "change my mind." It is a great benefaction—is Hyde Park. There, in his handsome cab, the invalid can go—the poor, sad child of misfortune—and insert his nose between the railings, and breathe the pure health-giving air of the country and of heaven. And if he is a swell invalid, who isn't obliged to depend upon parks for his country, he can drive inside—if he owns his vehicle...(70).

More appropriately reminiscent of Twain the American are his comments on the British Museum Library, "...the author's friend." "And what a touching sight it is," he said, "of a Saturday afternoon to see the poor careworn clergymen gathered together in that vast reading room cabbaging sermons for Sunday...(71)."

Of the common language which isolated him from his hosts, he commented,



...I collar a citizen, and I think I am going to get some valuable information out of him. I ask him how far it is to Birmingham, and he says it is twenty-one shillings and sixpence. Now, we know that don't help a man any who is trying to learn. I find myself down town somewhere, and I want to get some sort of idea of where I am—being usually lost when alone—and I stop a citizen and say: "How far is it to Charing Cross?" "Shilling fare in a cab," and off he goes. I suppose if I were to ask a Londoner how far it is from the sublime to the ridiculous, he would try to express it in coin (71)."

With thanks for the member's hospitality, with a tribute to the late Artemus Ward, who had made the club his London headquarters, and a pledge to let them return to their orgies in a moment. Mark Twain completed the rapport that was to remain between him and his English audiences, fellow writers, and friends for the following thirty-five years. It remained as it began, firmly rooted in good fellowship, mutual respect, and genuine affection.

Twain ended his first visit with a letter to the Times in which he promised to return early the next year, to spend much of it in England, in the fall lecturing "upon such scientific subjects as I know least about and may consequently feel less trammelled in dilating about..." (Times, Nov. 7, 1872, p. 8, col. 1). But before his return, he was to join with Charles Dudley Warner in the project that was to become The Gilded Age, the writing of which intensified a growing disillusionment with America, American values, and American democracy, and made him eager to return to England. Once more, in May, 1873, he was profoundly gloomy as he set sail, accompanied by Livy, by little Susy, and by two young friends, but the gloom was dispersed very quickly.

Of the second visit, from the very beginning, Albert Bigelow Paine commented, "It was a period of continuous honor and entertainment. If Mark Twain had been a lion on his first visit, he was little less than royalty now. His rooms at the Langham were like a court (II, 484)," where he was called upon by Robert Browning, Sir John Millais, Lewis Carroll, and dozens of others. The family spent much of the summer traveling in England, Scotland, Ireland, and France. Included was a visit to York, Twain's reactions to which he described in a letter to Mary Mason Fairbanks, who had been a fellow passenger on the Quaker City voyage to the Holy Land. He was particularly impressed with the shadows of the past that he found everywhere:

For the present we shall remain [in] the queer old walled town, with its crooked, narrow lanes, that tell us of their old day that knew no wheeled vehicles; its plaster-and-timber dwellings, with their upper stories far overhanging the street, and thus marking their date, say three hundred years ago; the stately city walls, the castellated gates, the ivy-grown, foliage-sheltered, most noble and picturesque ruin of St. Mary's Abbey, suggesting their date, say five hundred years ago, in the heart of Crusading times and the glory of English chivalry and romance; the vast cathedral of York, with its worn carvings and quaintly pictured windows, preaching of still remoter days; the outlandish names of streets and courts and byways that stand as a record and a memorial, all these centuries, of Danish domination here in still earlier times; the hint here and there of King Arthur and his knights and their bloody fights with Saxon oppressors round about this old city more than thirteen hundred years gone by; and

last of all, the melancholy old stone coffins and sculptured inscriptions, a venerable arch and a hoary tower of stone that still remain and are kissed by the sun and caressed by the shadows everyday, just as the sun and the shadows have have kissed and caressed them every lagging day since the Roman emperor's soldiers placed them there in the times when Jesus the Son of Mary walked the streets of Nazareth a youth, with no more name or fame than the Yorkshire boy who is loitering down the street this moment (Letters to Mrs. Fairbanks, 174-75).

Although Twain had planned to remain in England for several months to lecture after the family returned to London in September, 1873, Livy, exhausted, was anxious to return home, so Twain arranged for a brief series of lectures before returning to America to settle the family in Hartford. Punch heralded the announcement of his lectures with a characteristic note that echoes Twain's earlier comments on puns:

"Tis time we Twain did show ourselves." 'twas said  
By Caesar when one Mark had lost his head:  
By Mark, whose head's quite bright, tis said again:  
Therefore, "Go with me, friends, to bless this Twain."

His lectures—five evenings and a Saturday matinee—were held, beginning on October 13, in the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square. His topic was "Our Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands," an adaptation of a standard favorite. The hall was jammed to uncomfortable capacity for each lecture, and each was so loudly applauded that Twain was so touched that, according to the Times, when he could make himself heart after the last, he announced with much emotion,

Ladies and Gentlemen—I won't keep you one since moment in this suffocating atmosphere. I simply wish to say that this is the last lecture I shall have the honor to deliver in London until I return from America, four weeks from now. I only wish to say (here Mr. Clemens faltered as if too much to affected appear pathetic, but it is something magnificent for a stranger to come to the metropolis of the world and be received so handsomely as I have been. I simply thank you. (Paine, 493-94)

He gave the lecture again in Liverpool before they sailed on October 21. In a month he was back in London, lecturing to capacity crowds in the same hall on another traditional favorite, "Roughing it on the Silver Frontier." His stay this time, until January 13, 1874, was a continued triumph; he was elected a visiting member of the Athenaeum Club, quoted in Punch, besieged by celebrities, writers, and admirers, and bemused by the great trial, in which an illiterate imposture claimed a great estate, and which provided the inspiration for The Prince and the Pauper. He left with a great deal of reluctance to return home to substantial sales of The Gilded Age and the construction of a new house.

Before his departure he gave one last lecture in Liverpool, and at the end, as an encore, he read "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." Although he planned to return to England, upon arriving back in the United States he promised Livy that he would never again leave her for a single day, and he wrote his agent, James Redpath, that he never expected to stand on a lecture platform again. And he kept both promises...for several



months, although it was five and a half years before he returned to England in the summer of 1879, after a trip to the Continent.

During those five years Twain's affection for England, its institutions, and its literary community didn't decrease, but they marked in increasing cosmopolitanism on Twain's part that led him to spend much of 1878-79 in Germany, wrestling with "The Awful German Language" and writing A Tramp Abroad (1880), before spending six weeks in England--six weeks of dismal weather and low spirits--in the late summer of 1879.

The decade of the eighteen-eighties saw Mark Twain at his most productive and most American, both in residence and in literary productivity, publishing Life on the Mississippi (1883), The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885), touring the lecture circuit with George Washington Cable, and transmuting the English experience into the fiction of A Connecticut Yankee in Arthur's Court and the Prince and the Pauper, both of which were poorly received by English critics. But in the nineties he again turned cosmopolitan, spending much of his time between 1891 and 1895 in Europe, particularly in Berlin and Paris, culminating in the round-the-world lecture tour of 1895 that was to result in Following the Equator (1897).

Livy and their daughter Clara had accompanied Twain on the trip around the world, which was to culminate in an extended stay in England, where Susy and Jean, who had stayed in Hartford, were to join them. But they learned that Suzy was seriously ill; Livy and Clara sailed at once to nurse her, but when they arrived, she was dead. Livy, Clara, and Jean returned to England at once, to join Twain in his gloom for a long, lonely, secluded winter of mourning. His notes and letters of the period reflect his profound depression. To Howells, he wrote,

Goodbye. Will healing ever come, or life have value again? And shall we see Susy? Without doubt! without a shadow of a doubt if it can furnish opportunity to break our hearts again (Paine III, 1027).

His beloved London was equally reflective of his mood:

London, 11:30 Xmas morning. The Square & adjacent streets are not merely quiet, they are dead. There is not a sound. At intervals a Sunday-looking person passes along...(Paine, 1027).

And he made a rare observation of the city's social problems:

January 23, 1897. I wish the Lord would disguise himself in citizen's clothing & make a personal examination of the suffering of the poor in London. He would then be moved & would do something for them Himself (1027).

Even the publication of Joan of Arc, the only work he thought worthy enough to be dedicated to Livy, and its welcome critical reception in England did little to revive his spirits, nor did his election as an honorary member life member of the Savage Club. He finished Following the Equator, wrote briefly on the Queen's Jubilee for American papers, and then the family fled to the continent--to Switzerland, Vienna, Sweden, and again Vienna. In the summer of 1897 they returned to London, where, once again he became the literary lion of the season, speaking to the White Friars, the Vagabonds, the Savages, the Beefsteak, the Authors, and virtually every other club that saw itself as rakishly intellectual and Bohemian. Only the Boer War darkened his mood. To Howells he called it a "sordid and criminal affair," and said that he wrote articles against it everyday in his head, and yet his Anglophilia remained clear: "But I have to stop with that," he wrote; "Even if wrong--& she is wrong--

England must be upheld. He is an enemy of the human race who shall speak against her now....."(1096). He did write one article for the Times protesting the war but reconsidered and withheld it. When the family returned to New York in October, 1900, ending their longest stay in England, Twain was considerably more critically outspoken about his own country's contemporaneous bid for empire.

During the summer of 1900, the last time he would spend in England with Livy, he took a house, Dollis Hill, just outside of London, where the weather, the setting, and continuous company made them happy again. As the summer came to an end he wrote that "Dollis Hill comes nearer to being a paradise than any other home I ever occupied...(1109)"

Twain returned to New York to the lionizing he had known in England, and to a measure of acceptance by the intellectual and cultural establishment—as opposed to his fellow writers—that he had rarely known before in America. He received honorary doctorates from Yale and the University of Missouri, and the New York clubs—the Aldine, the St. Nicholas, the Press, and dozens of others—belatedly lionized him as had the English a quarter-century earlier.

In 1903 the family went to Florence to live, but in June, 1904, Livy died there, and Twain was again plunged into depression as he returned to America to bury her beside their children. Neither Twain nor Clara had either hope or plans for a future. His seventieth birthday party the next year, staged by Colonel George Harvey of Harpers, was a massive and impressive tribute, but his comments, as resigned as they were deeply felt, could only suggest to each of his friends that "...you step aboard your waiting ship with a reconciled spirit, and lay your course toward the sinking sun with a contented heart (1252)." Later, in an essay entitled "Old Age," he posed the inevitable question to himself: "Would you do it again if you had the chance? (1256)." For him, there was no answer.

Nevertheless, Twain was to make one more voyage to England, the most glorious of them all, in the summer of 1907. He arrived on June 18; he was entertained by Edward VII at a garden party on June 22, and on June 26, in the Sheldonian Theater in Oxford, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters from Oxford University. Wearing a robe of scarlet and gray, he was received, according to the London News, by a "veritable cyclone" of applause as he was awarded "the highest academic honors which the world has to give (1393)." But for the three years he had left to live, he treasured most highly a note from a young music critic turned playwright named George Bernard Shaw. It read,

I am persuaded that the future historian of America will find your works as indispensable to him as a French historian finds the political tracts of Voltaire. I tell you so because I am the author of a play in which a priest says, "Telling the truth's the funniest joke in the world," a piece of wisdom which you helped to teach me (1398).

Michigan State University



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THE BILLBOARD

## Worker-Writer in America

Jack Conroy and the Tradition of  
Midwestern Literary Radicalism, 1898-1990

Douglas Wixson

Jack Conroy, a coal miner's son who apprenticed at age thirteen in a railroad shop, later migrated to factory cities and experienced the privation and labor struggles of the 1930s. As a worker and writer he composed *The Disinherited*, one of the most important working-class novels in American literature. As the editor of a radical literary journal, *The Anvil*, he nurtured the early careers of Richard Wright, Nelson Algren, and Meridel Le Sueur before his own literary work was eclipsed in the Cold War years.

Douglas Wixson draws upon a wealth of letters and manuscripts made available to him as Conroy's literary executor, as well as numerous interviews with Conroy and his former contributors and colleagues. Wixson explores the origins and development of worker-writing, the numerous "little magazines" that welcomed it, and the history of its reception. He examines the differences between the midwestern and East Coast literary worlds, and the milieu in which Conroy and others like him worked—the Depression, job layoffs, factory closings, homelessness, and migration.

DOUGLAS WIXSON, professor emeritus of English and American Studies at the University of Missouri-Rolla, edited and wrote introductions to *The Weed King and Other Stories* and *The Disinherited*, both by Jack Conroy. He lives in Austin, Texas.

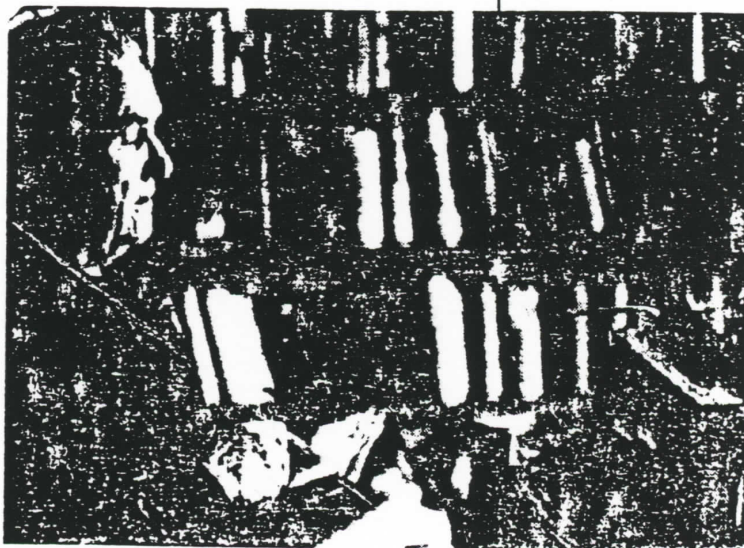
608 pages. 6 x 9 inches. 34 photographs. July.  
ISBN 0-252-02043-X. \$34.95

Supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

"A genuine breakthrough into a rich area of cultural history."

— Alan Wald

April



### Advance praise for *Worker-Writer in America*

"Important and stunningly original. Not only a fine and definitive biography of Jack Conroy but also the first detailed history of an important group of midwestern radical writers—novelists and poets—of the 1920s and 1930s. For the first time we learn the real material conditions of this literary network during the Depression. No previous work of scholarship comes close to telling this story at all, let alone in such rich detail." — Cary Nelson, author of *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory*

"This book constitutes a genuine breakthrough into a rich area of cultural history that has been neglected, trivialized, or misunderstood by previous scholars. Douglas Wixson uses the life of Jack Conroy and, collectively, the lives of a layer of other midwestern radicals, to explore the social roots and dynamics of the tradition of the worker-writer as it was created and then lost during the first three decades of this century. This is an impressive masterwork of interdisciplinary scholarship, blending biography, literary and cultural history, and social history into a felicitous whole." — Alan Wald, author of *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s*





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## The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE, pronounced "as-lee") was founded in October 1992 to promote the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to literature that considers the relationship between human beings and the natural world. Although this literary genre is sometimes called "nature writing," the name of the organization is meant to be as inclusive as possible, encompassing not only literary nonfiction but also nature poetry, environmental fiction ("ecofiction"), and other forms of literature that illuminate both human and nonhuman nature. ASLE encourages and seeks to facilitate new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research, including discussions between literary scholars and environmental economists, historians, journalists, philosophers, psychologists, art historians, natural scientists, and scholars in other relevant disciplines.

ASLE holds its annual meeting in conjunction with the Western Literature Association Conference each October. In addition, the organization will sponsor occasional independent conferences and arrange regular panels and discussion sessions on literature and environment at such meetings as the Western Literature Association Conference, the Modern Language Association Convention, the American Literature Association Conference, the College English Association Conference, the Society for Literature and Science Conference, the North American Interdisciplinary Wilderness Conference, and other events that members deem relevant to the aims and activities of ASLE.

Two publications are affiliated with ASLE: The American Nature Writing Newsletter and ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment. An e-mail network has been created to facilitate the communication of news and information concerning literature and environment; interested scholars



can access the ASLE e-mail bulletin board at the following address: ASLE-ADMIN@UNSSUN.SCS.UNR.EDU. In the summer of 1994, the ASLE bibliographical team will begin to circulate an annual listing of new scholarship

Few graduate programs currently offer courses in literature and environment, and students interested in this field are often dispersed throughout a wide range of disciplines; thus, many graduate students taking this approach to literature conduct their research in relative isolation. We plan, therefore, to send a brief announcement about ASLE to directors of graduate programs nationwide, asking them to recommend the organization to interested students. Because of the financial burden of graduate school, student membership is available at the reduced rate of \$10. The primary purpose of graduate student membership is to create a network of students with similar interests. In addition, ASLE organizes panels on literature and environment at graduate conferences, so as to support discussion among scholars at this level. An important new ASLE project is the preparation of a pamphlet called Approaches to Graduate Study in Literature and Environment; this publication, developed by the ASLE graduate liaisons and revised periodically, will advise current and prospective graduate students in their selection of graduate programs that support specialization in literature and environment and in their pursuit of advanced degrees in this field.

ASLE officers will work together with an international advisory board to support the study of literature and environment. We welcome inquiries and comments from anyone interested in the organization, including writers, teachers (at all levels, not only the college level), and students. Annual dues--entitling members to all mailings about ASLE activities, to participation in ASLE-sponsored conferences and conference panels, and to The American Nature Writing Newsletter--are \$15 (\$10 for students). The subscription rate for the optional journal, ISLE, is \$8 for ASLE members. Please send dues, subscription fees, and the attached checklist to:

Michael Branch  
Secretary-Treasurer, ASLE  
Department of English  
Florida International University  
University Park  
Miami, FL 33199

For further information, please contact:

Scott Slovic  
President, ASLE  
Department of English  
Southwest Texas State University  
San Marcos, TX 78666-4616

or

Cheryll Glotfelty  
Vice President, ASLE  
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(This information will be published in the annual ASLE Directory. Please indicate if you do not want any of the above information to appear in the Directory.)

### \*Amount Enclosed\*

ASLE Membership (\$15/students \$10): \_\_\_\_\_

Subscription to ISLE: Interdisciplinary  
Studies in Literature and  
Environment (ASLE members \$8/  
nonmembers \$10): \_\_\_\_\_

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Total

Please make checks payable to ASLE and return dues and fees with this form to:

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting of the

MIDWEST/MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

November 11-13, 1994, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago

AMERICAN LITERATURE II: LITERATURE AFTER 1870

"Always the procreant urge":  
Sexual Desire, Social Convention

Countless American novels--The Awakening, McTeague, Summer, The Age of Innocence, The Great Gatsby, What Maisie Knew, A Thousand Acres, Beloved, Sister Carrie, The Sun Also Rises, Babbitt, Maggie, Lolita, Native Son, The Sound and the Fury, and My Antonia, to name only a few--yield divergent portraits of erotic power, forbidden desire, sexual violence, impotence, frigidity, and the force of social convention. If Whitman was right, desire not only propels life but apparently also drives literary discourse.

Papers are invited that lend original insight into the questions of sexual desire, marital posturing, physical awakenings, taboos, promiscuity, prostitution and class, and the role of societal convention in American literature after 1870. Does the work satirize or validate societal restraints? Does it manipulate the romantic or sentimental themes of earlier cultures? Does it re-examine "The Woman Question"? Is sexuality more pronounced in the works of male writers? How does sex function as commodity, as product for exchange? Is verbal or physical brutality endemic to power? Do writers of color differ in addressing sexual themes? How do setting, architecture, and/or characterization reinscribe desire? Who writes the best romantic dialogue? If it was good for them, was it good for you?

Papers suitable for distribution and 20-minute discussion format. A brief abstract should accompany manuscript; papers will not be returned. **Firm deadline:** 1 April 1994 (No fooling!)

Section Chair: Heather K. Thomas  
Department of English  
Loyola College  
4501 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21210  
(410) 617-2894



# ***CALL FOR PAPERS***

**MIDWEST MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION**

**11-13 November 1994  
Palmer House Hilton, Chicago**

**English Literature II**

## **LITERATURE AND THE OTHER ARTS IN 19TH-CENTURY BRITISH CULTURE**

Papers are invited on all aspects of the relations among literature and the other arts in 19th-century British culture. Papers may be theoretical in nature, or may treat such particular applications as literary illustration, adaptations of literary works in music and the visual or plastic arts, multi-media works, artistic "inscription," or literary works incorporating features of the other arts. We especially encourage discussions involving non-canonical or extra-canonical works and artists, and discussions that expand conventional definitions of artistic interrelationships.

**Please send proposals and abstracts, by 1 March 1993, to**

Stephen C. Behrendt  
Department of English  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, NE 68588-0333

phone: (402) 472-1806  
fax: (402) 472-9771  
email: [sbehrend@unlinfo.unl.edu](mailto:sbehrend@unlinfo.unl.edu)

Postmodern Identities::National Identities::Postcolonial Identities::Ethnic Identities::Gendered Identities::Political Identities::Autobiographical Identities::Identity in Multiculturalism::Identity and Difference: Philosophical Approaches to Identity::Identity and Identification: Psychoanalytic Approaches::Anonymity::Amnesia::Writing Identities: Biography and Biographical Criticism::The Death of the Subject::Local Identities::Beyond Subjectivity::Mistaken Identities::Identity in Early Modern France; in the Golden Age in Spain; in the Eighteenth Century, etc.: Identity in Henry James; in Shakespeare; in Toni Morrison; etc.: Kathy Acker's Memorial to Identity ::Judith Butler's Subversion of Identity::Kaja Silverman and the Identity of Subjectivity::Self-Reliance, Self-Determination, Self-Help: Historical Moments in the American Culture of Identity::Self-Identification: Reading and Writing Autobiography::Official Identities: Identification and the State::Fake IDs: Identification and the Law::Community Identities::Identity Politics and Consciousness Raising::Detecting Identities::Subversive Identities::Postmodern Identities::National Identities::Postcolonial Identities::Ethnic Identities::Gendered Identities::Political Identities::Autobiographical Identities::Identity in Multiculturalism::Identity and Difference: Philosophical Approaches to Identity::Identity and Identification in Psychoanalysis

# 1994 M/MLA Identities

call for papers and panels      Chicago, November 1994  
deadline for Spring 1995 *Journal* submissions 1 Dec. 1995

Notions of "identity" have been central to work in a wide variety of literary and other fields (from political science to history) for decades. Implicit or explicit notions of identity guide an enormous amount of work in the study of autobiography, biography, fictional character, author-based studies, and other longstanding fields within literary studies. The debates surrounding theories of subjectivity, identity politics, ethnic studies, histories of nationalism and postcolonialism, reader response, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, film theory, and cultural studies all make use concepts of identity and difference. Most recently, post-identity theories, arguments about the subversion, multiplicity, and the conceptual inadequacy of identity have been voiced in a number of these same fields.

::Anonymity::Amnesia::Writing Identities: Biography and Biographical Criticism::The Death of the Subject::Local Identities::Beyond Subjectivity::Mistaken Identities::Identity in Early Modern France; in the Golden Age in Spain; in the Eighteenth Century; etc.: Identity in Henry James; in Shakespeare; in Toni Morrison; etc.: Judith Butler's Subversion of Identity::Kaja Silverman and the Identity of Subjectivity::Self-Reliance, Self-Determination, Self-Help: Historical Moments in the American Culture of Identity::Self-Identification: Reading and Writing Autobiography::Official Identities: Identification and the State::Fake IDs: Identification and the Law::Community Identities::Identity Politics and Consciousness Raising::Detecting Identities::Subversive Identities::Identical Twins::Identifying the Body::Anonymity::Amnesia::Differences::Fake IDs

Gender Studies Male: Section  
Midwest Modern Language Association  
Nov. 11-13, 1994 Chicago

### Call for Papers:

#### Teaching Men's Literary Studies: A Roundtable Discussion

Papers are invited focusing on the intersection of men's literary, or more broadly, cultural studies and pedagogy. Questions that might be considered: What new courses are we creating? How are we integrating current work in men's studies into already existing classes? What texts have been most useful? Are we employing new pedagogical strategies? (Are we interrogating "masculinist teaching?"). How have varying student populations responded to our teaching? What are the disciplinary, interdisciplinary, institutional, and societal implications of teaching men's cultural studies?

Please send abstracts for papers, course descriptions with rationales, or make inquiries to:

Warren Rosenberg, English Department, Wabash College,  
Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933.

Deadline for Proposals: March 18, 1994  
(Earlier submissions encouraged)



## 1994 CCCC RESEARCH NETWORK FORUM

### ONGOING CALL FOR WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS

*The Research Network is a pre-convention Forum of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. It invites submissions of work-in-progress presentations from all those engaged in research, study, and/or exploration of any area of composition studies, rhetoric, writing pedagogy, technical communication, etc. This research may include any and all forms of study, from more specifically empirical examinations to very broad-based explorations of language, culture, and society.*

*The Forum is a day-long session on the day prior to the official start of the CCCC Convention in Nashville. The Research Network (formerly a pre-convention workshop) is now a Forum, meaning that no extra fee is charged to participants who have registered for the CCCC Convention. The Research Network's session will include addresses by plenary speakers as well as small-group sessions. It offers an excellent opportunity for both beginning and experienced researchers to engage in an informal dialogue about issues and topics that concern them.*

*Please send 250-word proposals to:*

Vincent Casaregola  
Dept. of English  
Saint Louis University  
221 N. Grand Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63103  
(314) 658-3010

*Deadline: Please send proposals as soon as possible, but the deadline is Dec. 15, 1993.*



## CALL FOR PAPERS

# New Economic Criticism

an interdisciplinary conference sponsored by the

**Society for Critical Exchange and  
Project on Rhetoric of Inquiry**

to explore the relations of  
economics and literary studies

**October 20-23, 1994**

Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio

Some broad areas of relevance include: literary readings of economic texts + economic readings of literary texts + theorizing value + cultural consequences of a world market/currency + gift/exchange theory + literary debt + inflation + symbolic capital + symbolic economies + psychic economies, transference, and exchange + Marxism + consumption + excess + economimesis + accounting(s) + pollution trading + The Body Shop + home economics + stepping beyond economic man + forgery, theft, and other crimes of writing + narrative in the marketplace + legacies of possessive individualism + economics and canon formation + modeling vs. metaphor + culture and/as/vs. commerce + exchange vs. production + authorial vs. post-authorial economies of writing + new materialism vs. old new historicism + the metaphor of the market + the economics of fashion + the uses of interest + the discourses of speculation + J. S. G. Boggs + critical theory in a global economy + others.

Address inquiries and proposals for panels to the conference organizers. To be considered for inclusion, papers (or 750 word abstracts) must be received by **March 15, 1994**. Papers will circulate in advance of the conference and selected conference papers will be published.

Organizers: Donald McCloskey  
Department of Economics  
University of Iowa  
Iowa City, IA 52242

Martha Woodmansee  
Department of English  
Case Western Reserve Univ.  
Cleveland, OH 44106

A CALL FOR PAPERS  
for a  
SPECIAL SESSION  
at the  
1994 MIDWEST MLA CONFERENCE  
Palmer House Hilton  
Chicago, IL  
November 11-13, 1994



*Na tuende, an Apache woman, is shown here with the beautiful garb and exquisite  
craftwork typical of many American Indian women. The photograph is circa 1900  
© 1994 by the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico*

**FEMALE NATIVE AMERICAN WRITERS:  
HANGING FROM THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR**

The woman who is the focus for Native American writer Joy Harjo's poem "The Woman Hanging from the Thirteenth Floor Window" clings to a window ledge, existing on the margin of being, much like female Native American writers have done and continue to do. Until only fairly recently—and then only in a very limited fashion—have these writers been able to make their voices heard in the literary world and in the classroom. This special session seeks to remedy the situation by bringing the work of female Native American writers—whether one of the earlier writers or one of the very latest—before the scholarly community. Interdisciplinary papers and those by Native American scholars are particularly welcome.

1-2 Page Abstract by April 1, 1994  
to

Claudia A. Limbert, Asst. Prof.  
Department of English  
Penn State University  
147 Shenango Avenue  
Sharon, PA 16146  
(412) 983-5838



CALL FOR PAPERS \*\*\*\*\* PLEASE POST

1994 MIDWEST MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION CONVENTION  
CHICAGO, IL \* NOVEMBER 11-13, 1994

*THE WAYS WOMEN SEE THEMSELVES / THE WAYS OTHERS SEE WOMEN*

---

"[M]ore than three quarters of American women support efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society," yet only a minority, a third at most, identify themselves as feminists" (qtd. in Wendy Kaminer, "Feminism's Identity Crisis," The Atlantic Monthly October 1993: 51+).

---

As we work to change women's status in society, who defines us: our families, our peers, our cultures, ourselves? Can labels only limit us? Or, can labels empower us? Beyond these small questions are larger questions: Are labels necessary to define who we are? Who benefits from labeling us?

The Women and Literature Sessions of the Midwest Modern Language Association invite papers that investigate **THE WAYS WOMEN SEE THEMSELVES / THE WAYS OTHERS SEE WOMEN:** in critical analysis of women's literature and film; in theoretical discussions on labeling and its effects; in personal narratives, poetry, or short fiction that confront these issues; in pedagogical perspectives on teaching women to embrace or move beyond labels.

SEND COMPLETE MANUSCRIPTS (16 double-spaced pages maximum) to

Dr. Demetrice A. Worley  
Department of English  
Bradley University  
Peoria, IL 61625

DEADLINE: MARCH 21, 1994

CALL FOR PAPERS \*\*\*\*\* PLEASE POST