

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first annual meeting of the Philological Association of the Carolinas took place 6-8 March 1997, the cusp of spring in the coastal plain, on the campus of East Carolina University. Thursday evening's opening reception at the Greenville Hilton featured the ECU Jazz Ensemble—perfect for soothing jangled, mid-term nerves—and afforded a welcome opportunity to catch up on the progress and projects of far-flung colleagues. After a good night's rest we hurried Friday morning, the ubiquitous coffee and donut in hand, to the first of thirty-three sessions, where scholars from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico read on topics spanning the world of letters from Stratford-on-Avon to Santiago. Special sessions delved into African and African-American feminism, imparted uses of computer technology in teaching world literature, and honored our late friend Norman Olsen.

A special treat was the bus-pilgrimage to the nearby hamlet of Ayden for a lunch of authentic pit-cooked barbeque, cornbread, and Pepsi at Pete Jones's place. Later that evening in a more formal setting our banquet speaker, Robert Hanning of Columbia University, having flown from New York to Greenville, SOUTH Carolina, arrived just in time to deliver an address both trenchant and titillating on the medievalist's purpose and prospects in today's world. When the applause for the final speakers in Saturday's late-morning sessions faded and we made ready to return home, we somehow felt more able to face Monday's Freshman Comp or FREN 101, more determined to realize Wordsworth's prophesy: ". . . what we have loved, / Others will love, and we will teach them how." And that should be the yield of every academic conference.

The success of the 1997 meeting derived in large part from the meticulous planning and supervision of Local-Arrangements Coordinators Peter Standish and Bruce Southard and the work of the PAC Executive Committee: President Judith Barban (Winthrop University), First Vice President Merritt Moseley (University of North Carolina at Asheville), Second Vice President Peter Standish (East Carolina University), Secretary-Treasurer Cynthia Ho (University of North Carolina at Asheville), Member-at-Large Peter Whelan (Francis Marion University), and Patricia Ward (College of

Charleston), Co-Editor of *Postscript*. Organizing such an event ranks as one of life's truly daunting challenges.

The ten papers in this issue reflect PAC members' diversity of critical approaches to language and literature. Anna Blumenthal's essay on August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* argues that its African-American characters enact an archetypal or mythic pattern of sacrifice and rebirth—a pattern that is “culturally neutral”—as they seek to discover their true identity and connections with others. In the realm of contemporary Latin American literature, Maria Rippon probes narrative voice, ideology, and the role of fate in Isabel Allende's best-known work. Craig Renfroe interprets *The War of the Worlds* as H. G. Wells's complex and conflicted response, in the guise of science fiction, to rampant British imperialism.

Other papers provide illuminating empirical data to aid readers in their interpretation of specific works. In a paper offering new biographical information, Jean Cash uses letters, journals, and personal interviews with friends of Flannery O'Connor to document the novelist's celibacy as an aesthetic decision. Michael Cody clarifies the tendentious purpose of Thomas Welde's preface to John Winthrop's book about the Antinomian controversy of 1636. Spanish Peninsular specialist John Akers discovers the source material for José María de Pereda's *Pachín González*, an historical novella set against the backdrop of a maritime disaster, the explosion of the *Machichaco* in 1895. Tony Perrello uses the historical context of Jonson's *The Alchemist*—the fear of the plague threatening the original audience at the Blackfriars theatre in 1610—as the springboard for a Bakhtinian analysis of the play's comic treatment of the body. In her paper on fictional depictions of the Jew in Luther's Germany, Keri Bryant quantifies negative and positive portrayals and connects social and economic developments to changes in attitude.

Two papers on the comedic claim top honors this year. In the Founders Prize Essay in Foreign Literatures and Languages, Kathryn Willis Wolfe, an expert on French theater, eloquently elucidates the function of fashion affected by Molière's pretenders to erudition and prominence. The 1998 Founders Prize for British or American Literature and Language goes to Nick Ross and Bill Rogers for “Shakespeare's Rotten Fruit.” Shakespeare's frequent references to fruit interested Ross, who joined forces with Rogers, a biologist, when he learned of Rogers's knowledge of the medlar.

Their technical expertise from different disciplines leaves readers newly impressed with Shakespeare's wit, savoring puns we would have been unable to follow before. The combination of detailed information and verbal hijinks in Ross and Rogers's article seems to be in the spirit both of Shakespeare's comedy and of the collegial atmosphere we enjoy at each PAC meeting.

This issue of *Postscript* represents, as ever, a massive collaborative effort. To the session chairs who nominated the many excellent papers for consideration, I express sincere appreciation. Associate Editor Julia Eichelberger (College of Charleston), despite a murderous fall teaching schedule, performed splendidly—with help from Trish Ward, Joe Kelly, Scott Peeples, and Simon Lewis—in selecting and editing the outstanding British and American essays. Editorial Assistant Miriam Tomblin (The Citadel) has made my work easy through her prodigious computer skills and unflinching confidence that “everything will be OK.” I should like to conclude with a special word of thanks to Trish Ward, who recruited me four years ago to her editorial staff, schooled me in patience, and sharpened my eye for fine work. AEG

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Associate Professor of Foreign Languages and Assistant Director for Career Services and Placement at Wofford College, **John C. Akers** has written for *Neophilologus*, *Mester*, the *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, and the *Americas Review*. His research interests include the Spanish novel and Chicano literature.

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Professor of English at James Madison University, **Jean W. Cash** teaches Southern literature and has written extensively on Flannery O'Connor. Her article in the current issue of the *Flannery O'Connor Bulletin* details the novelist's relationship with Andrew Lytle.

**Michael Cody** is a doctoral candidate studying early American literature at the University of South Carolina at Columbia. His dissertation treats the writings of Charles Brockden Brown.

Former lecturer in the Department of Literature and Language at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, **Tony Perrello** is completing a doctorate in Renaissance literature at the University of South Carolina at Columbia.

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**Maria R. Rippon** received her doctorate in comparative literature last year at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish at Gannon University.

**William Rogers** is Associate Professor of Biology at Winthrop University. He specializes in animal behavior and vertebrate

evolution. In his spare time he cultivates medlars, melons, and orchids.

**Gordon N. Ross** is Professor of English at Winthrop University, where he teaches courses in Chaucer and Shakespeare.

**Kathryn Willis Wolfe** is Associate Professor of French at Penn State Erie, the Behrend College. Her current research explores seventeenth-century French comedy, especially that of Molière, as well as unpublished scholarly correspondence of the period.