



EAAS Nineteenth-Century American Literature Study Group Florence Workshop

18-19 October 2012



From the back: Asun Lopez Varela, Mary Ann Calo, Gayle Murchison, Frank Martin, Renée Bergland; Janaka Lewis, Jelena Sesnic; Verena Laschinger, Brigitte Zaugg, Valerie Dancelme, Ralph Poole

Venue: Museo di Storia Naturale
dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze
Sezione di Zoologia "La Specola"
Sala degli Scheletri
Via Romana 17, Firenze

The workshop was sponsored by **the American Consulate in Florence (Italy)**, **The Paris X / Paris Ouest Nanterre-La Défense** and research group **FAAAM** (www.u-paris10.fr), **The Rome Study Center of Richmond University** (www.richmondinrome.it), **The Collegium for African American Research - CAAR** (www.caar-web.org) and **Michel de Montaigne Foundation** (www.fondazionemontaigne.it).

The sixth workshop of European Study Group of Nineteenth-Century American Literature was held in Florence, Italy in 2012. The topic was slave narratives and the constructions of race. Harriet Ann Jacobs' autobiographical novel, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), functioned as the starting point for the participants to examine how race was constructed in nineteenth-century American slave narratives as well as personal correspondence and journals of African American women. As became apparent, often in the fictional, autobiographical, travel, and personal writings the racial discourses became intricately intertwined with discourses of gender. Moreover, the texts questioned the American concept of democracy, conditions for citizenship, and definitions of political and legal national identity.

Participants from France, Croatia, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Lithuania, Romania, Italy, and the United States presented papers on Harriet Jacobs, Sarah Remond, Ellen Craft, Lydia Maria Child, Charlotte Forten Grimke, Louisa May Alcott, Frances Harper, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Augusta Evans, and discussed Francis Lieber's house slaves as well as introduced African American women in the visual arts and in music.

On **Thursday 18 October** the workshop started with a welcome from **Professor Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour**, one of the founding members of the EAAS Nineteenth-Century American Literature Study Group. She gave an overview of the group's activities from the past to the present. Following the Welcome, the first presentation on the program was the inspiring talk of the guest speaker, **Professor Farah Griffin from Columbia University**. She talked about Harriet Jacobs and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper.



Guest speaker, Farah Griffin

After a full day of presentations and lively discussion, exchange of ideas, and sessions of questions and answers (see full program below),



Janaka Lewis



Daniela Daniele



Ada Savin, Gayle Murchison, Frank Martin

we walked through the city to the **Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology** where we had a guided tour of the museum. Since the museum was already closed for the day, the study group members were able to privately explore the collection together with their guide, **Monica Zavattaro**.



Sirpa Salenius and the workshop participants



Sirpa Salenius, Renée Bergland, Gayle Murchison, Frank Martin, Janaka Lewis

The day ended with a welcome cocktail reception at the **American Consulate in Florence**.



Gayle Murchison, Consul General Sarah Morrison, Jelena Sesnic



Verena Laschinger and Asun Lopez-Varela



Renée Bergland, Farah Griffin; behind Brigitte Zaugg, Paule Lévy, Ada Savin

Friday 19 October was another intense and stimulating day of presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions.



From left to right, front row: Ada Savin, Paule Lévy, Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour, Farah Griffin; second row: Ausra Paulauskiene, Mariana Net, Maria Holmgren Troy; third row: Jelena Sesnic, Brigitte Zaugg, Hartmut Keil; last rows: Asun Lopez-Varela, Renée Bergland

At the end of the day, the participants toured **Casa Guidi**, the home of the poets **Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning**. The visit ended with an aperitif at their Victorian home.



Mariana Net, Gayle Murchison, Hartmut Keil, Sigrid Weigl, Bruno Michelotti, Maria Holmgren Troy, Farah Griffin, Valerie Dancelme, Ralph Poole



And that was not only the end of the second day but also the end of the workshop. Some of the presentations (3-5) that focused on nineteenth-century African American women's writing will be selected for publication in the *African American Review*, Fall 2014.

Negotiating Identity:
Womanhood, Race, and Slavery in the Nineteenth Century

18 - 19 October 2012



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Museo di Storia Naturale
dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze
Sezione di Zoologia "La Specola"
Sala degli Scheletri
Via Romana 17, Firenze

Thursday 18 October

9:00-9:30	Welcome Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour, Paris X/ Paris Ouest Nanterre-La Défense
9:30-10:15	Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and the Study of Nineteenth-Century African American Women <u>Keynote</u> : Farah Griffin, Columbia University
10:15-10:45	Q&A, discussion
10:45-11:15	Coffee break
11:15-11:30	Reassessing Black Womanhood: Nineteenth-Century African American Women Abroad Sirpa Salenius, Independent Scholar/University of Eastern Finland
11:30-11:45	Passing as Performance: Ellen Craft's Picaresque Journey to Freedom Ada Savin, University of Versailles
11:45-12:00	Lessons in Freedom: Harriet Jacobs, Lydia Maria Child, and Charlotte Forten Grimke Janaka Lewis, University of NC at Charlotte
12:00-12:15	The Politics of Genius: Women and Slavery in Harper, Evans, and Stowe Renée Bergland, Simmons College
12:15-13:00	Q&A, discussion
13:00-14:00	Lunch break
14:00-14:15	Slave Recordings
14:15-14:30	The Narrative of Captivity and Harriet Jacobs' Slave Narrative: Transition from 'the Population' to (National) Subjecthood Jelena Sesnic, Zagreb, Croatia
14:30-14:45	Revisiting the Grandmother's House as Chronotope in Harriet Jacobs' <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> Maria Holmgren Troy, Karlstad University
14:45-15:00	"This is not a story to be passed on": Race, Gender and Genre in Octavia Butler's <i>Kindred</i> Paule Lévy, University of Versailles-Saint Quentin
15:00-16:00	Q&A, discussion
16:00-17:00	City tour
17:00-18:00	Guided tour: Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology Via del Proconsolo 12
18:30-20:00	Cocktail at the American Consulate Lungarno Vespucci 38

Friday 19 October

- 9:00-9:30 **Cool Politics and Sex Slaves from Colonial to Contemporary Times**
Asun Lopez Varela, Universidad Complutense de Madrid
- 9:30-9:45 **A Man's Rendition of a Woman's Experience: Ernest J. Gaines' *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman***
Brigitte Zaugg, Université de Lorraine
- 9:45-10:00 **Private Theatricals and Feminist Abolitionism: 'Jo's and 'Meg's Sensation Plays**
Daniela Daniele, Università degli Studi di Udine
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- 10:00-10:30 Q&A, discussion**
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- 10:30-11:00 Coffee break**
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- 11:00-11:15 **A Slaveholding Liberal in the Antebellum South: Francis Lieber's Observations on his Female House Slaves**
Hartmut Keil, University of Leipzig
- 11:15-11:30 **Ethnicity or Race: Lithuanians in the Grand Scheme of Immigrant Classification**
Ausra Paulauskiene, LCC International University, Klaipeda, Lithuania
- 11:30-11:45 **Gypsy Narratives in Nineteenth-Century Romanian Literature: A Case Study**
Mariana Net, University of Bucarest
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- 11:45-12:15 Q&A, discussion**
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- 12:15-13:00 A visit to la Specola museum**
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- 13:00-14:00 Lunch break**
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- 14:00-14:15 **Music, Slave Narratives and Autobiographies: Case Studies Bessie Jones, William Grant Still, and Mary Lou Williams**
Gayle Murchison, The College of William and Mary
- 14:15-14:30 **The Visual Legacy of the *Ex-Femina* Enslavement Narrative: A Consideration of Art, Race, and Reasoning in Selected Works by Six Contemporary African American Women Artists**
Frank C. Martin II, University of South Carolina
- 14:30-14:45 **Representations of African American Women in the Visual Arts**
Mary Ann Calo, Colgate University
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- 14:45-15:45 Q&A, discussion**
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- Closing remarks**
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- 16:00-18:00 **Aperitivo at Casa Guidi**
Piazza San Felice 8

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www.caar-web.org

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