



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 22, 2018

TO: Participants, NEH Regional Application-Writing Workshop
Texas Tech University, Lubbock

FROM: Russell M. Wyland
Acting Director, NEH Division of Research Programs
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SUBJECT: Review of applications for mock panel

The attached materials are for the mock panel portion of the application-writing workshop on Friday, April 6, 2018. These are actual applications submitted to the Endowment's Fellowships program. To get the most out of the mock panel session, please read the applications and assign each a rating using the attached evaluation criteria and rating scale.

I have chosen Fellowships applications because they work particularly well when discussing application-writing strategies. However, the strategies we discuss during the mock panel portion of the workshop should be applicable far beyond NEH Fellowships and, I hope, beyond NEH programs.

As you read the applications, please keep in mind that they have been selected for a reason: that is, to give you a chance to consider three approaches to crafting applications. They are not intended to serve as models, nor are they intended, by virtue of their subjects, to suggest particular areas of Endowment interest. Applications for NEH awards are as diverse, in both subject matter and methodology, as the applicants who submit them.

For reasons of confidentiality, I have omitted or generalized cover sheets, résumés, and letters of recommendation for this exercise.

I look forward to meeting with you on the 6th.

Attachments

Criteria for Evaluation:

Evaluators are asked to apply the following five criteria when judging the quality of applications.

1. The intellectual significance of the proposed project, including its value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.
2. The quality or promise of quality of the applicant's work as an interpreter of the humanities.
3. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant's clarity of expression.
4. The feasibility of the proposed plan of work, including, when appropriate, the soundness of the dissemination and access plans.
5. The likelihood that the applicant will complete the project.

Fellowships support projects at any stage of development.

Rating Scale:

E = Excellent

VG = Very Good

G = Good

SM = Some Merit

NC = Not Competitive

Sorry, NEH does not allow split ratings (e.g. VG/G or E/NC) or other types of shading (e.g. VG- or G++).

SAMPLE - Early African American Cinema

Résumé highlights

Position at time of application:

Assistant professor (3rd year) of American studies at a small, public comprehensive university

Education:

Ph.D. from a Research I university in history. Dissertation title not given

Awards and Grants:

- No previous interaction with NEH.
- 1 teaching award
- 2 dissertation grants

Publication highlights:

- Contributor to 2 co-edited collections
- 1 article in a disciplinary journal
- 2 forthcoming articles in major disciplinary journals
- 5 conference papers and invited talks

Recommenders:

- Dissertation director
- Executive director of a major American history project

Narrative:

Envisioned Communities investigates the role of cinema in the modern black experience and the generative role that African Americans played in the creation of American modernity. Two questions animate this study. First, how did African Americans consolidate their institutions and social bonds amid the distending forces of turn-of-the-century migration? Second, how and why did cinema--as a location, medium, and set of practices--become so important to the collective articulation of black identity in the twentieth century?

By uncovering the forgotten history of early black film exhibition, *Envisioned Communities* reconfigures our understanding of black cultural practices and institutional life at the turn of the century. During the “nadir” of race relations, when white redeemers dismantled the considerable accomplishments of Radical Reconstruction, African Americans turned inward to their own communities and organizations as a means of achieving collective racial progress. But even as they sought new ways of bringing the race together, hundreds of thousands of black migrants were on the move—leaving the rural hinterland for cities across the urban South and West. Strengthening black institutions and consolidating their efforts for racial advancement would require new strategies and solutions.

At this moment, black church, lodge and school leaders discovered that the moving pictures could be incorporated into their plans for racial progress. Across the urban South and West, black reformers embraced modern cinema as a tool for raising money, creating shared social experiences, and disseminating their ideas about the philosophy of racial uplift. Motion pictures were not only suitable for the exhibition-ready spaces of black institutions, the technology was also transportable across the same railways that structured turn-of-the-century black migration. In 1905, for example, the annual meeting of the National Baptist Convention was recorded on film and then brought to churches across the South. For the thousands of black Baptists who could not afford the time or money to travel to the annual meeting, the films offered visual evidence of the progress of the organization and a glimpse of some of the most famous race leaders in action.

Moreover, modern cinema appealed to working class migrants. Recognizing this fact, delighted black reformers used the medium to draw working class blacks away from supposedly “degrading” urban amusements such as the dancehall and the saloon. When cinema shifted into colored theaters, however, black ministers began to rethink their earlier enthusiasm for the medium. Soon, they were preaching against the inherent evils of the moving pictures—even crusading against the same types of films that had been exhibited, just years before, in their churches. These tensions forced middle class blacks to reconsider their beliefs in the philosophy of racial uplift, which championed both piety and black-owned businesses.

To reconcile these ambivalences, African Americans turned their attention to critiquing visual representations of the race. Pugilist Jack Johnson’s 1910 victory contributed to this shift as working class blacks, too, began investing their racial identities in the images of blackness onscreen. Although African Americans never agreed on how cinema should represent the race, their political demands increasingly cited the need for self-representation and the belief that mischaracterizations in film constituted “civil death” and a violation of “natural rights.” In 1915, these ideas informed the first mass black protest movement of the twentieth century against the film, *The Birth of a Nation*.

Envisioned Communities is an interdisciplinary project that contributes to three areas of scholarship: African American migration, black social and institutional formation, and early American cinema. To begin, *Envisioned Communities* challenges the framework of the Great Migration (1917–1930). Previously, historians such as James Grossman have argued against the classical periodization of the Great Migration, (1917–1930), and scholars including Nell Irvin Painter, Joe Trotter, and Carole Marks have reconfigured the rubric of the North by studying migration to the intra-South and Midwest. *Envisioned Communities* synthesizes these interventions in the historiography at the same time it presents a broader narrative of black migration that illustrates how African Americans forged their cultural practices and institutions across space and time. The demographic changes at the turn of the century set the stage for black institution building at the national level and the emergence of a black leisure culture, which engendered the growing demand for cinema in the South and West.

Additionally, as the first study to uncover the history of early black film exhibition in churches, lodges and schools, *Envisioned Communities* not only re-situates African Americans as pioneers of modern cinema, it uncovers the unique role of film going in the development of black institutional life. African Americans responded to the dramatic changes of modern life—migration, hardening Jim Crow segregation, and the growing demand for urban amusements—by devising new means of fortifying their institutions and social bonds. During this transformative period in American history, African Americans integrated the moving pictures into their aspirations for black progress. Indeed, without accounting for the longer history of cinema in black life, it would be impossible to fully understand why cinema remains so important to the cultural and political demands of African Americans today.

Envisioned Communities is based on my dissertation, but the final project will include a website with GIS maps and a significantly revised book manuscript. The book manuscript and the digital maps and are both intended to reach a wide audience. I have been offered a book contract by Harvard University Press, which specializes in publications for the “educated general reader.” I have also received an invitation to revise and resubmit an article based on this research from the *Journal of American History*. A year-long NEH grant will enable me to conduct additional research at the University of California, Los Angeles, and to complete revisions on the manuscript. It will also allow me to complete a series of GIS maps that will show the circuits of black film exhibition prior to 1915. These maps, which will hopefully encourage further research on this new subject of study, will be made available to the public through my website and the Black Film Center/Archive at Indiana University, Bloomington. Because I hold an MFA in digital media arts (in addition to my doctoral degree in American History), I have the requisite skills to complete the technical aspects of this project.

Chapter Outline:

Chapter 1: *The Devil's Cook Kitchen*: In an era of mass migration and Jim Crow segregation, black leaders began using motion pictures to raise money, create shared social experiences, and disseminate their ideas. Traveling across the same railways that structured turn-of-the century migration, itinerant black cinema pioneers brought the entertaining and easily transportable technology into black churches, halls, and schools. Chapter 2: *A Quest for Happiness*: Working class black migrants constituted the majority of black urbanites and, in general, laborers tended to favor rowdier, less “respectable” amusements—enjoyments that middle class blacks believed stunted the progress of the race by breeding immorality and laziness. The moving pictures,

however, proved an exception to these clashes in leisure sensibilities. Black working-class migrants flocked to film exhibitions, which became a lucrative attraction for black churches and a widespread urban leisure pursuit. Chapter 3: *A Most Needful Vacancy*: The growing popularity of the moving pictures, the professionalization of black film showmen and women, and segregation in white theaters contributed to a new era in moving picture exhibition for black audiences. Colored theaters appeared in cities along the migratory path, especially in towns where theater managers and investors predicted a rapid growth in black settlement. Middle class blacks celebrated these new colored theatres as symbols of racial progress in the Jim Crow city. Chapter 4: *A Monument to the Race*: Tensions soon developed between the managers of colored theaters and the leaders of black churches. When black city dwellers began skipping Sunday services for the latest moving pictures, black reformers were faced with a conundrum. Commercial moving picture exhibition pitted two middle class aspirations—profits and piety—against one another, forcing the ideology of racial uplift, and the middle class, into crisis. Torn between a desire to celebrate black-owned businesses and their anxieties about the colored theater, middle class blacks turned their attentions to the screen. It was also at this point that middle class black discourse about racism and the cinema broadened from concerns about exhibition venues, theater ownership, and Jim Crow seating policies to considerations of racial representation and images onscreen. Chapter 5: *The Place of Blackness*: This chapter follows the dramatic events that propelled cinema, particularly its representational power, to the center of black public life in 1910. That year, Jack Johnson became the first undisputed black heavyweight-boxing champion of the world. While the middle class was ambivalent about prizefighting, working class black Americans celebrated Johnson's victory as a symbol of strength, skill, and power. Almost immediately, moving pictures of the prizefight became the locus of public debates about racial representation and censorship legislation. Both laboring and middle class black public discourse now emphasized film content as a critical site of racial representation. In response, the United States attempted to regulate the representational power of Johnson's blackness by defining the moving pictures as commerce and restricting their distribution across state borders. For the first time, the federal government's legislation was explicitly aimed at regulating race through the demobilization of racial images. Thus, for both white and black Americans, this moment ushered in a new conceptualization of race. Chapter 6: *Envisioned Communities*: This chapter argues that the first mass protest movement by African Americans in the twentieth century occurred in response to the moving pictures. When *The Birth of a Nation* premiered in 1915, a confluence of interests led groups with vastly different motivations to mobilize en masse. The mass movement allowed otherwise contentious groups to fit their respective concerns and strategies under the umbrella of a larger campaign. Suddenly, black ministers, fans of Jack Johnson, and colored theater owners found themselves protesting together. Chapter 7: *The Frontier*: An independent black film industry emerged after 1915. The marketing strategies and distribution models of race film companies promoted a transnational and nascent diasporic sense of black identity in their desire for international markets.

PRIMARY SOURCES:

<i>Afro-American</i> (Maryland)	<i>Freeman</i> (Indiana)	<i>Rising Son</i> (Missouri)
<i>American Citizen</i> (Kansas)	<i>Enterprise</i> (Omaha)	<i>Savannah Tribune</i>
<i>Appeal</i> (Minnesota)	<i>Indianapolis Ledger</i>	<i>Sedalia Times</i> (Missouri)
<i>Baltimore Afro-American</i>	<i>Indianapolis World</i>	<i>St. Louis Palladium</i>
<i>Broad Ax</i> (Utah, later Illinois)	<i>New York Age</i>	(Missouri)
<i>Broad Axe</i> (Minnesota)	<i>New York Amsterdam News</i>	<i>Washington Bee</i> (D.C.)
<i>Chicago Defender</i>	<i>Philadelphia Tribune</i>	<i>Western Outlook</i> (California)
<i>Cleveland Gazette</i>	<i>Pittsburgh Courier</i>	<i>Wichita Searchlight</i>
<i>Colored American</i> (D.C.)	<i>Plaindealer</i> (Topeka, Kansas)	<i>Wisconsin Weekly Advocate</i>
<i>Colored Citizen</i> (Kansas)	<i>Richmond Planet</i> (Virginia)	

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Nasaw, David. *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements*. New York: 1993.

Painter, Nell Irvin. *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986.

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Robinson, Cedric J. *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*. Chapel Hill: 2007.

Stewart, Jacqueline. *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity*. Berkeley: 2005.

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Waller, Gregory A. *Main Street Amusements: Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896-1930*. Washington D.C: 1995.

SAMPLE - Animals and Language from Aesop to Erasmus

Résumé highlights

Position at time of application:

Full professor of English (rhetoric) at a state university

Education:

Ph.D. from a Research I university in rhetoric. Dissertation on ancient rhetoric.

Awards and Grants:

- 1 previous NEH fellowship (for first book).
- 2 book prizes for previously funded book.
- 1 teaching award
- 2 dissertation grants

Publication highlights:

- 2 single-authored books with university presses
- Co-edited one collection of essays and two special journal issues
- 13 article in a disciplinary journal
- 8 conference papers on topic of grant application

Recommenders:

- Director of major research library
- Professor of Classic at a major overseas universities

Rhetoric and Its Beasts: Animals, Language, and the Human from Aesop to Erasmus

For centuries, since its inception in fact, rhetoric has been conceived of as an exclusively human art. Only humans, after all, could artfully use language, the very definition of rhetoric. Curiously, and despite rhetoric's presumed status as a particularly human art, pre-modern treatises about rhetoric are crawling with animals of the nonhuman variety. Aristotle finds beasts useful when theorizing humility and shame in the *Rhetoric*. Cicero and Quintilian write of horses, dogs, and birds. Style treatises from antiquity offer passages featuring animal images and sounds to endow their language with life. At first glance, animals in the history of rhetoric, like domesticated animals such as oxen and horses, seem to be there merely to serve humans.

And yet a more careful look at these texts and traditions reveals that the relationships between humans and nonhumans are not straightforwardly one-sided. Particularly of interest here are texts and traditions related to rhetorical education, beginning with ancient school exercises in rhetoric known as the *progymnasmata*, exercises that endured for more than fifteen centuries (Kraus "Progymnasmata, Gymnasmata"). Rhetoric's beasts range from nonhuman mammals to reptiles to birds and insects, and for centuries they taught young humans—themselves configured as less-than-human (Witmore, Golden)—to hone their senses, to attend to difference, to follow their instincts by pushing beyond existing doxa, and to ultimately cultivate their animal sides.

At its broadest, my new monograph finds the animal roots of western humanism at every juncture tangled with, and formed by, rhetoric. Examined in this way, rhetoric stands as one of the earliest disciplines—earliest historically as well as in individual intellectual lives—where the distinction between human and nonhuman animals featured explicitly, persistently, and yet not as predictably as existing work in animal studies might suggest. The study helps to account for the curious and contradictory role animals play in language theories and language training, and that accounting brings forth a decidedly sensuous, lively, and kinetic history of rhetoric and of rhetorical education.

Methods and Organizing Principles

The *progymnasmata*, remarkable both for their nonhuman content and their curricular persistence (they were used in schools from at least the first through the sixteenth centuries CE), form this study's core and dictate its span. Anchored to, but not limited by, the *progymnasmata*, the study takes up a range of objects from theoretical treatises and pedagogical handbooks to emblematic images. I have been tracking animals in rhetorical texts and traditions for about six years, from when I began noticing the curious prevalence of animals in the broad surveys of rhetoric's history I teach at the graduate and undergraduate level. From that base, I have chosen to focus on the places in premodern texts and treatises central to rhetorical theory and training where animals show up most prominently. (I decided to tack with the lifespan of the *progymnasmata*, the decline of which corresponds with the rise of enlightenment science, when a study of rhetoric and its beasts would need to take a new direction.) The process of selecting texts for the study has given argumentative shape to what began as open-ended curiosity about what animals were doing in rhetorical education and theory. So far I have found that animals show up when early rhetorical theorists and *progymnasmata* authors urge aspiring writers and speakers to appeal to senses (visual, tactile, kinetic). Featuring these passages therefore draws out rhetoric's less-than-rational side.

What began as thematic research, then, has developed into a "panhistoriographic" method, which offers an expansive view of a cultural/disciplinary trend. The effect of such an approach is to make the small shifts in animal rhetoric over time more visible, and the broader continuities more remarkable. Such chronological and methodological range helps to reveal the links between animal-inflected school exercises and broader cultural movements and moments (e.g., philosophy of mind, print culture, animal rights arguments). The book follows that trajectory, with the first half focusing on theoretical texts meant to teach its readers something about rhetoric, and the second half branching out to rhetoric's formative place in broader cultural phenomena such as the art of memory and the visual world of emblems.

Chapter One, "Zoostylistics: Or, How Animals Brought Rhetoric to Its Senses," argues, as the title suggests, that animals repeatedly helped theorists draw attention to rhetoric's visual, aural, and tactile

capacities. Nowhere is this more evident than in texts focused on rhetorical style, especially those in the Aristotelian tradition, such as Book III of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Demetrius's *On Style*, and Longinus's *On the Sublime*. These writers use animals to show how language can enliven the senses—especially vision and hearing, rhetoric's two leading senses, according to Quintilian. Aristotle enlists Homer to explain his conception of a vivified, energetic rhetorical style (*energeia*): "he makes everything move and live, and *energeia* is motion" (*Rhetoric* III.11.4). And Homer does this, repeatedly, by invoking the sights and sounds of animals. The commentary from Aristotle, Demetrius, and Longinus therefore yields what I call a "zoostylistics," a vital, sensuous style energized by animals. If animals help to animate language, they also help style theorists convey how words get under the skin—how they sting or bite.

Chapter Two, "Beast Fables and Rhetorical Education," considers fable, a genre largely ignored by rhetorical scholars, owing (perhaps) to its association with children and trivial matters. But it is exactly that relationship, I contend, that makes the genre worth considering in the joint context of rhetoric's history and of animal studies. As Susan Crane observes, "the trouble with fable is above all that the form invites little thought on creatures other than human" (43). The chapter, then, surveys fable's role in ancient oratory and rhetorical theory, finding more evidence for animal-directed thought, and gleaning six rhetorical lessons from fables that, I argue, accompany—and at times precede—the moral didacticism usually associated with the genre. The resulting investigation uses this rhetorical frame to question the prevailing anthropomorphic reading of fables by calling attention to the genre's zoomorphism, its focus on the animal shapes, behaviors, and species-to-species distinctiveness.

Chapter Three, "Looking beyond Belief: Ekphrasis, Paradoxical Encomia, and Visual Inquiry" focuses on two interconnected exercises in the *progymnasmata* sequence where animals feature prominently, ekphrasis (description) and encomium (praise), especially mock or paradoxical encomia. The key texts here are Lucian's *On the Fly* and Michael Psellos's "bug set," four previously untranslated encomia dating to the eleventh century, set pieces praising the tiniest of insects and written in the Lucianic vein. While Libanius's doxical (sincere, orthodox) encomia to the peacock and the ox feature in the chapter, they do so only to set the stage for those encomia that stretch beyond belief (the most literal meaning of paradox), of which Lucian's *Fly* (2nd century CE) is the most famous example. Psellos carries on the tradition while further dramatizing its probing sense of wonder by describing and lavishing praise on bedbugs, fleas, and lice. Lucian is taken up and cited by the likes of Erasmus and even Robert Hooke, the seventeenth-century inventor of the microscope. That detail is not incidental to the story unwound by this chapter. The chapter, that is, culls from these paradoxical encomia a theory of magnified rhetorical vision—a kind of amplification through magnification—that cultivates an urge to bring the tiniest of animals up close, before the eyes, to press the senses into the realm of the wondrous because unknown. As such, the chapter provides an important backstory for early-modern visual regimes discussed by Clark and Neri from the points of view of cultural history and art history respectively.

Chapter Four, "The Mind's Aviary: Animals, Memory, and Thought," turns over the banner slogans of animal studies, namely Claude Lévi-Strauss's dictum that "animals are good to think with," and Jacques Derrida's more recent meditation that "thinking perhaps begins" with the look *of* (rather than *at*) the nonhuman animal. This chapter, that is, considers animals' relationship to thought, not as tools or as initiators, as Lévi-Strauss or Derrida would have it, but as its quick, fleeting, pulsating models. Such an account is drawn from writings about memory, which as Mary Carruthers's work demonstrates, developed into an astonishing art form during the Medieval period. Animals appear frequently in ancient and Medieval discussion of memory as aids to memory (the author of *ad Herennium* blithely offers ram's testicles as an all-purpose mnemonic), as objects imprinted in memory. But one of the more striking tendencies is to figure memory as either a pigeon coop or a bee hive, suggesting that thoughts themselves are lively, buzzing, fluttering entities, likely to fly away if not trained or held captive. In this way, animals have long occupied human thought not just as objects or as metaphors, but constitutively.

Chapter Five, "Creaturely Eloquence: Animals Emblems" turns to the Early Modern emblem tradition, examining the animals that illustrate rhetorical concepts there. These nonhuman creatures offer visual commentary on capacities of and suspicions about rhetoric. The chapter's lead image is of *Persuasione* in Ripa's *Iconologia* (1603), which features a woman with a leashed, three-headed animal.

The different heads depict attentiveness (cat), goodwill (dog), and teachability (monkey), three audience-related rhetorical goals (North 429). The rhetorical concept of opportunity or occasion (greek *kairos*) is cast (by Alciato) as an animal encounter between prey and predator. Joannes Sambuca emblemizes History, Dialectic, and Rhetoric as, respectively, a winged dog, a chimera, and a sphinx. Taken together, these beastly images give a (literal) picture of Early Modern attitudes toward rhetoric, even as they continue to give life to—and tacitly teach—rhetoric’s kinetic, sensuous, nonrational components.

Chapter Six, “Erasmus’s Bestiary,” serves as a capstone to the book with a focus on animals in the writings of the famed humanist and teacher of rhetoric, Desiderius Erasmus (1456-1536). In *In Praise of Folly* (1509/10), Erasmus observes that “if we enquire into the state of all the dumb creatures, we shall find those fare best that are left to nature’s conduct.” This observation about the importance of animal freedom and the many counter examples that follow it—birds caged, horses bridled and taken to war—draw from and push beyond the lessons of the *progymnasmata* in order to turn lively thoughts back to animal welfare. In *Adages*, animals model instructive behavior, much as they do in fables of Aesop, thereby challenging the reading presumed by many scholars working in animal studies that animals have long been treated as a means to becoming more human. In fact, I have selected texts for this study that complicate such conclusions and show rhetoric’s relationship to animals as at best reverent and at worst ambivalent. With Erasmus, then, the study returns full circle to Aesopian themes but with an argument, grounded in Erasmus’s treatise against hunting, about how Aesop’s millennium-and-a-half long persistence in rhetorical education encouraged identification with nonhuman animals, thereby enabling an important early example of animal rights discourse.

This study yields a very different historical account of animals precisely because it brings a different educational / textual tradition to bear on “the question of the animal.” At the same time, it offers a new perspective on rhetoric’s history: rather than presuming, as most histories of rhetoric do, the centrality of *logos* as both reason and speech, this history stresses energy, bodies, and sensation. Animals, that is, helped the premoderns theorize and teach rhetoric’s less-than-rational properties, and attending to the role of those properties in the development of rhetoric offers a more comprehensive picture of the art.

Competencies, Skills, and Access

Together, both of my previous books prepared me to write this one. The first, *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and the Nonhuman Animal*, examines the fox and the octopus as ancient models of cunning, bodily intelligence. There I also became practiced at drawing on a range of texts and artifacts, a feature of the book that received positive mentions in reviews. In particular, though, the second book on Kenneth Burke’s theories of bodies and communication (*Winner of the 2010 Diamond Anniversary Book Award from the National Communication Association*) led me to see just how useful nonhuman animals can be for theorizing extra-lingual communicative processes from a rhetorical point of view.

In addition to my graduate sub-focus in Medieval Literature, I have taught upper-level and graduate courses in the periods on which the book focuses. My training in Greek and Latin equips me to work with original languages and to navigate manuscripts and early print editions. (In *Bodily Arts* I did my own translations, and I devoted a month last summer to translating the Psellos encomia for chapter three.)

Work Plans, Final Product and Dissemination

I have thus far written the first three body chapters and have presented all of them as invited lectures and at conferences (a total of five presentations). I plan to draft chapter four in the coming months. A fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities will allow me to devote a solid year, starting July 2014, to completing my final two chapters and the book’s introduction. The University of Chicago Press has indicated early interest in the manuscript for a new series on human-animal relations across disciplines. With the help of the NEH I plan to submit the manuscript there in September 2015. Once published, *Rhetoric’s Beasts* will bring rhetorical studies into the ongoing conversations about animals in the humanities while also offering a counter-history of rhetoric and rhetorical education, one that resists the usual reason-based, cerebral approach and focuses instead on sensation and movement.

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SAMPLE – Early Modern Nuns in the Spanish Philippines

Résumé highlights

Position at time of application:

Associate professor of Spanish at a small private college

Education:

Ph.D. in Spanish a western Research I university. Dissertation on Mexican nuns.

Awards and Grants:

- 3 travel grants for archival work in Spain
- 1 teaching award

Publication highlights:

- No previous NEH awards
- 1 single-authored book with a university press
- 1 co-edited work, which won an award for outstanding scholarly edition
- 6 articles related to proposed topic in scholarly journals
- 10 conference papers and invited lectures on proposed topic

Recommenders:

- Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at state Research I university
- Associate Professor of history at state comprehensive university (branch campus)

The field of convent literature in the early modern Hispanic world has grown with the publication of several landmark studies on nuns in the 1980s such as *Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns in Their Own Words* and *Cultura femenina novohispana*. More and more annotated editions of nuns' manuscripts have been published and critical volumes on religious and secular women are no longer rare. This scholarship has illuminated the view of the complex cultural milieu of convent life. It offers important insight into convent writing, especially the genres of *vidas* (spiritual autobiographies) and hagiography. Yet, many of these studies focus only on one side of the Atlantic and examine nuns' lives only within the context of the thick walls of their convents. Furthermore, barring a few exceptions such as Carloyn Brewer's book, *Shamanism, Catholicism and Gender Relations in Colonial Philippines, 1521-1685* (2004), there is a lacuna of scholarship on the topic of gender in the Spanish Pacific. Fortunately, many of the insights learned from studies of women and religion in the Atlantic context can be applied to the Pacific part of the Spanish empire. Albeit small, there were seed groups of nuns that left their home convents in Spain (and elsewhere from places like Mexico and Peru) to establish new communities in distant lands and continents. These women show the important cultural impact of Catholic nuns in the expansion of the Iberian empire, an area of study that has not received the recognition it deserves.

In the Museum of the Prado hangs a portrait of one such nun. She is garbed in the traditional Franciscan habit of the Poor Clares. Although her veined hands and wrinkled face tell us that she has already lived many years, the artist portrays the nun with a penetrating gaze of determination. In her left hand she holds a book – most likely the Rule of Saint Clare – and in her right, she clutches a long crucifix. The painter of this captivating portrait is none other than Diego Velázquez. His subject is the Spanish nun from Toledo, Sor Jerónima de la Asunción (1555-1630). She sat for this portrait in 1620 while staying for almost two months in Seville on her way to the Philippines. She had just turned sixty-six years old at this time and Velázquez was only twenty-one. She would go on to found the first Convent of Poor Clares in Manila. He would become the most famous Golden Age painter in Spanish history.

Yet, there is more to this story. Last year while conducting archival research in Spain, I stumbled across a little known biography about Sor Jerónima written by a fellow nun and travel companion to Manila, Sor Ana de Cristo (1565-1634).

Due to this portrait, and the subsequent beatification process that still continues until this day, Sor Jerónima is familiar to art historians and scholars of Spanish nuns. In contrast to Sor Jerónima, there are virtually no studies on the unpublished manuscript written by Sor Ana de Cristo. Within the biography about the nun from Toledo, Sor Ana's narration offers the reader a fascinating taste of multiple places within the Iberian empire. Part of her work describes their fifteen-month journey to the Philippines, a saga that also included an overland trek across Mexico from Vera Cruz to Acapulco. According to her own account, Sor Ana was taught how to write by a Franciscan friar during the voyage and she took up the task of documenting the journey and writing a lengthy biography of Sor Jerónima (450 folios) once she arrived in Manila. A close analysis of Sor Ana's portrayal of Sor Jerónima tells us as much about the biographer as about her subject. Although in an assessment of her own writing, Sor Ana belittles herself as barely literate, a careful examination of her writing style reveals a literate woman adept in the rhetoric of obedience and humility.

Works like Sor Ana's are not always easily categorized into one genre such as biography or *vida*, and more frequently than not, they became a blending of the two or more styles of writing. Moreover these types of manuscripts prompt us to question authorship. We do not know

for sure if Sor Ana was the sole author of her work. On the contrary, it appears that other nuns in Manila collaborated in the last part of the document (there are sections narrated in the third person plural). Throughout this study, to reduce confusion, I have chosen to call Sor Ana's text a biography, but I am aware that this is a misnomer. Perhaps Sor Ana never put a title on her manuscript because she did not view it purely as a biography of Sor Jerónima, but more as a hybrid text: a combination of biography, autobiography, travel narrative and convent chronicle. Darcy Donahue's superb study on Discalced Carmelites speaks to the intricate interplay of authorship of *vidas* and other convent writing. She describes writing within the convent as a communal activity. In one case she examines a co-authored biography signed by five nuns. Her study sheds light on Sor Ana's manuscript and speaks to the collaborative nature of convent writing – a tradition that the nuns from Toledo brought with them to the Philippines.

The importance of Sor Ana's manuscript should not be underestimated. I believe she was well aware of the fact that her writing would never be published. She also knew, however, that her words would form the basis of future biographies. Like the collaborative nature of her text with other nuns from her convent, she also was collaborating with male ecclesiastical authorities, such as Ginés de Quesada and Bartholomé de Letona on their publications. Thus, Sor Ana's words carried weight and power. By hiding behind the veil of holy obedience not only was she able to explore her own concept of self, but she actively participated in the promotion of a saint. Sor Ana's work forms one of the main building blocks in Sor Jerónima's long road to canonization, a process that is still going on today.

The capstone to my project is the composition of a book-length work based on the writings of Sor Ana and those of other nuns in the Spanish Philippines. From a broad perspective my research provides a roadmap to the multi-faceted aspects of early modern nuns who ventured beyond the walls of their cloistered convents and travelled to the outermost fringes of the Spanish empire. Sor Ana, a fifty-five year old nun who had not left her community for a better part of thirty-eight years, offers the contemporary reader unique insight into the world of travel and adventure across several continents during the early 1600s. Her commentary on the native Filipino population and images of the eastern "other" add new and interesting perspectives on convent writing. Her story will appeal not only to the lay reader but to a wide array of scholars across disciplines. This project aims to bring to the fore a little known area of the world from the perspective of nuns living in the Spanish Pacific.

My book is in the early stages. I have presented two conference papers on Sor Ana's manuscript and I am in the process of finishing an article on the text. I have also completed a rough draft of the introduction which has helped shape the main themes of the book. With a grant from my university, I will spend two weeks this summer conducting archival research in Madrid and Toledo, Spain. I already have a partial transcription of the manuscript that I obtained from a previous visit to a Franciscan archive in Madrid. This transcription forms part of the beatification process of Sor Jerónima. I plan to visit the Convent of Santa Isabel in Toledo this summer and transcribe missing portions of the manuscript. This upcoming academic year (and before the start of the grant) I plan on translating select portions of the text for the book's appendix. For this reason I have not included any samples as part of the grant application.

During the year-long period of the NEH grant I have two main goals. First, I will make two research trips: one back to the archives in Spain and the other to archives in Mexico City. I still need to conduct investigation on the historical aspects of the document, filling in blanks about Sor Ana's background and the time that the women spent in Mexico City. Further, I want to use archival sources and rare books from the National Libraries in Mexico and Madrid to

conduct research on travel to the Philippines in the seventeenth century. I am not planning on traveling to Manila because it is my understanding that the Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental in Madrid holds much of the archival sources pertaining to the Philippines.

My second main goal is to complete a draft of the book. After the introduction, the book will be divided thematically into three main sections. The first includes chapters on the history of Spanish maritime travel to the Philippines, nuns' travel, and travel writing in the Iberian Atlantic and Pacific. The second section focuses on nuns' writing and literacy in the early modern period. One of chapters studies the genre of convent writing and examines the manuscript as a collaborative effort among the Spanish nuns based in Manila. Another explores the topic of miraculous literacy, and the third analyzes the biographical subject of Sor Jerónima as a window into Sor Ana's own exploration of herself as a writer. The last section is devoted to race and class in the early modern period. One chapter illuminates Sor Ana's portrayal of race during the journey (in particular her encounters with native populations in Mexico and the Philippines), and the final chapter analyzes Sor Ana's vision of class structure within the convent. Once established in Manila, for example, the Spanish nuns fought with Church authorities to allow native women to take the veil. Lastly, the book will include an appendix with bilingual Spanish to English translations of several key portions of Sor Ana's manuscript along with the few extant letters written by Sor Jerónima de la Asunción.

I believe that I have all of the intellectual tools necessary to complete this project. I was trained originally as a scholar of colonial Latin American literature, and I wrote my dissertation on the rhetorical strategies of colonial Mexican nuns. During that time I spent a semester in Mexico City conducting archival research at the Archivo General de la Nación and at the National Library. After graduating I returned to Mexican archives during 3 summers and subsequently published several articles on nuns of New Spain. In recent years, I have further developed my expertise on nuns on both sides of the Atlantic; in particular the subgenre of convent chronicles and travel writing. In 2009 I published an annotated edition and translation of *Journey of Five Capuchin Nuns*. The original manuscript, written by the abbess Madre María Rosa, documents a travel saga of a small group of nuns that journeyed from Madrid, Spain to Lima, Peru in the early 1700s. That project required a significant amount of archival research in Spain and a knowledge of paleography (study of handwriting) to transcribe the original manuscript. My expertise and hard work were rewarded when the book won the *Josephine Roberts Prize* for best Scholarly Edition. Although the area of the Philippines is somewhat new territory for me, the lives and writings of Spanish nuns share some common threads with their counterparts in Spain and Latin America. Furthermore, I am currently the lead editor in a forthcoming volume titled *Women of the Iberian Atlantic* (Louisiana State University Press, 2012), which has provided me valuable background knowledge on women and gender within the fluid boundaries of the Iberian empire. I have already visited the Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental in Madrid and I am familiar with their holdings. Also, I have been in contact with the nuns in Toledo and I will be consulting the original manuscript this summer.

The intended audience of this project will be students and scholars of Hispanic literature and the early modern history of monasticism. It will be of interest also to anyone who would like to learn more about religious women, gender, and colonization within the Spanish empire. My ultimate goal is to publish 'Early Modern Nuns in the Spanish Philippines' as a monograph with a scholarly press. The appendix will include bilingual versions (Spanish and English) of Sor Ana's manuscript, making accessible for the first time, her writing to readers of Spanish and English.

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