

CALL FOR PAPERS
(Deadline: September 30, 2013)

45th Annual Convention, Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA)
April 3-6, 2014, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Susquehanna University

Philology and its future among the new Humanities
Chair: Francesco Benozzo (University of Bologna, Italy)

How do we perceive the old traditions that we study, and ourselves inside these traditions? Why should philology claim a crucial role in the epistemological debate among scholars of different disciplines? This panel would like to wonder about the responsibilities of philologists in contemporary and future world, and about their answers to the problems connected with multiculturalism, multiethnicity and multimediality. Papers can be in any modern language. Please submit 300-500 word abstracts to Francesco Benozzo, francesco.benozzo@unibo.it<<mailto:francesco.benozzo@unibo.it>>.

Abstract

This session aims to point out why philology should claim a crucial role in the contemporary epistemological debate among scholars of different disciplines. Since its foundation, the philological approach deals with what we call now “multiculturalism”, and in this sense it could enlighten the positive messages and the great possibilities connected with pluralism and diversity. If we consider traditions in their perpetual evolution, and the philological work as an important part of this perpetuation, we must conclude that when we study a document belonging to the past, we are always studying ourselves. In this sense, philology does not primarily deal with texts and the interaction between texts, but with the richness of the relationships between humans and their artefacts (including texts). Traditions, also textual traditions, represent multicultural and heterogeneous complexities, and philology – intended also as a social science – should indicate possibilities to orientate in the complexity of contemporary world.

But philologists urgently need to reconcile with human communities. They need to leave their common destinations (libraries and manuscript rooms) and reach real places where to meet real people. They need to admit that traditions belong to people. People must become our clients and we should work for a different public from ourselves.

To avoid the risk of becoming a self-referencing and hyper-technical discipline, philology should be able to consider the human and human as a valutive and not as a descriptive adjective. Finally, it should be able to go beyond the traditional boundaries of its habitual fields of enquiry, and to confront itself with the investigations of cultural biology, with the perspectives opened by the neo-evolutionistic and neo-Darwinian theories, and with the interpretation of cultures perceived as viral phenomena and studied with instruments which are similar to the ones used by epidemiology and by the genetics of

parasites.

Please include with your abstract:

Name and Affiliation

Session ID: 14240

Email address

Postal address

Telephone number

A/V requirements (if any; \$10 handling fee with registration)

The 2014 NeMLA convention continues the Association's tradition of sharing innovative scholarship in an engaging and generative location. This capitol city set on the Susquehanna River is known for its vibrant restaurant scene, historical sites, the National Civil War museum, and nearby Amish Country, antique shops and Hershey Park. NeMLA has arranged low hotel rates of \$104-\$124.

The 2014 event will include guest speakers, literary readings, professional events, and workshops. A reading by George Saunders will open the Convention. His 2013 collection of short fiction, *The Tenth of December*, has been acclaimed by the New York Times as “the best book you’ll read this year.” The Keynote speaker will be David Staller of Project Shaw.

Interested participants may submit abstracts to more than one NeMLA session; however, panelists can only present one paper (panel or seminar). Convention participants may present a paper at a panel and also present at a creative session or participate in a roundtable.

<http://www.nemla.org/convention/2014/cfp.html>