The ANS Session of the Annual MLA Conference  
Boston, Massachusetts January 3rd -6th, 2013

The ANS session of the 2013 MLA in Boston is scheduled to take place  
at 10:15+11:30 a.m. on 04-JAN-13 in Beacon F,  
in the Sheraton Boston,  

The title of this session (no. 256) is  
“Naming Character, Characterizing Names:  
Onomastic Studies of M. Twain, H. Thrale, and T. Morrison”

Below is a detailed description of each of three presenters, their winning abstracts, and the official  
ANS paper review and selection process.

Presenter 1  
Dr. Heather Hathaway  
Marquette University  
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Short Abstract  
Redefining Race and Religion: Biblical Naming in the Fiction of Toni Morrison  
This paper examines Toni Morrison’s deliberate distortion of biblical names and religious titles in Song of Solomon and Paradise to critique patriarchal religious structures and reclaim the Bible as a text of salvation rather than tool of oppression for African Americans. In Song of Solomon, Morrison manipulates names and the act of naming itself to redefine the Bible as a source of liberating self-love rather than a justification for racialized abjection. In Paradise, Morrison uses names and the act of naming to expose how doctrinal religions, even when intended to emancipate, still hazard separating “self” from “other” in dangerous ways.

Biographical Note  
Presenters:

**Presenter 2**
Dr. Lisa Berglund  
English Department KH 326  
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**Short Abstract**
Was Hester Lynch Piozzi just ‘Dr. Johnson’s Mrs. Thrale’?
Critics signal emotional loyalty, theoretical affiliation, political correctness, or sensitivity to the academic marketplace when they name their subjects. Though Hester Lynch Piozzi appears on five important title pages, for 20 years she was Hester Thrale—confidante, amanuensis and muse of Samuel Johnson. In becoming Mrs. Piozzi, she defied societal expectations to choose a new husband and a new name: her enemies emphasized such disloyalty by characterizing her as “Signora Piozzi,” while early biographers memorialize “Dr. Johnson’s Mrs. Thrale.” Still resistant to naming their subject as she named herself, modern critical studies and editions employ at least 14 different names.

**Biographical Note**
Lisa Berglund, a professor in the English Department at SUNY-Buffalo State College, has published articles on Piozzi, Johnson, and Boswell, and on teaching book history and eighteenth-century studies. She is presently editing three volumes of Piozzi’s works. She also serves as Executive Secretary of the Dictionary Society of North America.

**Presenter 3**
Dr. Rebecca Cantor  
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LMU Drive  
Los Angeles, California 90045-2659  
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**Short Abstract**
Naming and Moral Sense in Mark Twain’s Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts
The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the strong connection between Twain’s life and his use of literary naming. After briefly examining the elements of Twain’s biography that lend themselves to the active naming in his works, I will report findings from a close reading of *The Mysterious Stranger*—an excellent example of Twain's naming techniques. Within *The Mysterious Stranger*, I will explore the instances and significance of naming, especially as they relate to moral sense, making connections to Twain’s personal experiences with and comments about names and naming.

**Biographical Note**
Rebecca Guess Cantor is currently working on transforming her doctoral dissertation entitled “The Power to Name Pudd’nhead: Names and Naming in Mark Twain’s Works” into a book. Her scholarly interests include literary onomastic, American literature and history with a special emphasis on the nineteenth-century and transcendentalism, as well as rhetoric and composition pedagogy.
The ANS Paper Review and Selection Process

The American Name Society was once again very pleased to receive an outstanding selection of international submissions for the ANS session of the 2013 Modern Language Association Conference. This year as last, the selection process for reviewing the abstracts took place in two different stages. In the first stage, three senior scholars in onomastic research carefully reviewed the final set of abstract submissions sent from around the world. After the qualitative and quantitative results of their collective blind evaluations were complete, a rank ordering was determined for all of the abstracts received. This rank ordering was then used as a basis for the second stage of the review process.

During this phase, ANS President (Kemp Williams) in close consultation with the First and Second ANS Vice Presidents (Donna Lillian and Iman Laversuch Nick) selected the final three papers for this year’s special panel. Based on their solid yet innovative research methodologies, each of these submissions were unanimously praised for their potential to contribute many new insights to the field of literary onomastics. Moreover, when grouped together, it was felt that this specific combination of papers would offer MLA attendees an excellent opportunity to both explore and appreciate the dynamic diversity of modern research currently being conducted in literary onomastics today. Information concerning each of the winning abstracts and their contributors can be found below.

Congratulations go again to not only the contributors of the three winning papers, but also to the entire group of researchers who responded to this year’s call for papers. In addition, special thanks are extended to this year’s review committee for their dedication and service to the Society. Thanks to their dedication and service, this year’s upcoming session will no doubt be another great success. Here is looking forward to seeing you there!