

Faculty Research Grant Report
“Crawfish, Clubland, and Cannibalism:
Poppy Z. Brite’s Queering of the Asian-American Body”
Gary Richards
May 15, 2010

I. Non-stipend budget expenditures:

The allocated \$150 was used for the purchase of scholarly books and copying. Carol Siegel’s *Goth’s Dark Empire* was no longer readily available for purchase, so David L. Eng’s *Q&A: Queer in Asian America* was substituted. (Eng is one of the authors listed within the Documentation for the project.)

II. Review of Results

A. Brief summary of the project

My faculty research grant, “Crawfish, Clubland, and Cannibalism: Poppy Z. Brite’s Queering of the Asian-American Body,” specified that I revise, expand, and place for publication my 2008 conference paper of the same title. In particular the grant called for me to incorporate a wider range of theoretical perspectives on contemporary gothic literature and Asian-American queerness as well as historical and sociological contextualizations of Asian-American (primarily Vietnamese-American) communities in the post-1970 greater New Orleans region. As delineated on the proposal, this project constitutes personal faculty development in three ways: increasing my presence within the published scholarly discussions of contemporary southern literature; contributing a chapter to the book-length manuscript on which I am currently working, “A Queer Quarter: Literary Imaginings of Gay New Orleans”; and enhancing the theoretical groundings that influence my selection of texts for classroom teaching and providing newly mastered information to relay to students in those classes devoted to sexuality, U.S. literature, and southern literature.

B. Achievement of Goals

In the application, I stated that by the end of the summer 2009 I hoped to have completed the following objectives:

1. Reread the novel carefully, reconsidering the arguments I had furthered in the April conference presentation
2. Review the scholarship on Brite’s literary production and *Exquisite Corpse* in particular, noting the scholarship that has been published since the spring and updating my arguments in light of these new perspectives
3. Immerse myself in theories of Asian-American queer sexualities, an arena where I, as a scholar heretofore more heavily invested in European- and African-American queer sexualities, need to think more carefully

4. Read heavily in contemporary New Orleans history to contextualize more substantively this novel historically and sociologically
5. Articulate my synthesis of this reading and my thinking about his novel through the luxury of thirty pages
6. Revise these articulations, perhaps after the solicitation of other scholars' opinions
7. Survey in light of the completed argument which journal is most appropriate for publication and submit the finalized piece

Results

1. Done
2. Done
3. Done
4. Done
5. Done within draft form. While revising the essay, I was approached by scholar Trent A. Watts to contribute to a collection of essays on literary representations of southern sexuality. Because the essay on Brite's novel seemed appropriate for this venue, I have offered it to Watts for inclusion. The proposal for the collection is currently under review at Louisiana State University Press, which published Watts's latest edited collection, *White Masculinity in the Recent South* (2008) as well as my book (2005).
6. Awaiting the response from in-house editors at LSU Press and, if the broader project is accepted, outside reviewers.
7. Awaiting the response from LSU Press.

C. Assessment of the Adequacy of the Project's Procedures and Approaches

No serious problems arose, though intervening projects with more pressing deadlines deferred some of the completion of the goals until later within the 2009-2010 academic year.

D. Dissemination of Project

1. Drawing upon the beneficial thinking I have done while at work on the project, I have opted to include for the first time Brite's novel in my two sections of FSEM 100C7: Sexuality in Southern Literature in the fall of 2010, thus complicating presumptions about the region's sexuality and reinforcing the University of Mary Washington's commitment to minor identities and their representations.
2. If Watts's collection is accepted by Louisiana State University Press, the essay, after final approval by in-house and outside reviewers, will be circulate in book form from one of the major scholarly presses in the field. If the collection is not accepted by LSU Press or another academic press, I will attempt to place the essay in an appropriate journal, as was the plan articulated on the proposal.