HOLLYWOOD

IS A

VERB

Ed Ruscha

Hollywood Is A Verb, 1979

pastel on paper, 23 × 29 inches, (D1979.06)

©Ed Ruscha, collection of The Broad Art Foundation
Letter from the President

If you are reading this letter, there’s a good chance you are a Library Foundation Member, or a patron who picked this publication up in your neighborhood library. In either case, I hope you were interested in this newsletter in part because of the striking cover. By questioning the conventions of language and highlighting its endless adaptability, Ed Ruscha’s uniquely Californian artwork is the perfect icon to represent the Library Foundation’s latest project, *Hollywood Is a Verb: Los Angeles Tackles the Oxford English Dictionary*. We are so grateful to Mr. Ruscha and to The Broad Art Foundation for generously allowing us use of this image.

*Hollywood Is a Verb* is the third in a series of projects in which the Library Foundation of Los Angeles examines a classic text through a Southern California lens. Previous iterations included *Whatever Happened to Moby Dick?* and *The L.A. Odyssey Project*. Each includes a wide range of programs and activities aimed at exploring the connections between literature, history, language, science, the humanities, and of course, what it means to be an Angeleno. I look forward to these projects each year because they are beautiful examples of how the Los Angeles Public Library connects patrons to the major issues of our time simply by revisiting the books we know and love.

This year, we thought we were taking a risk in choosing a dictionary as a candidate for recounting timeless stories. But in fact, the *OED* — in its last print edition — represents 20 volumes of storytelling about the history of the language one word at a time. Indeed, the Oxford English Dictionary is the earliest example of global crowd-sourcing: a word can only officially be entered by demonstrating consistent usage across place and time.

There is so much to be mined from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. For example, we’ve found that the closer we look, the more we notice how the English language is actually made up of loanwords: words adopted from other languages that are incorporated without translation (examples: café, kindergarten, bazaar). Dictionaries have the power to mirror social change and help multicultural communities such as ours find common ground. The *Oxford English Dictionary* reveals the true nature of English as a cross-pollinated language. As such, we are proud to be presenting "A Very L.A. Spelling Bee/Concurso de deletereo súper LA": a Spanish-and English-language spelling bee, featuring simultaneous live interpretation, on March 19th.

Read on to learn more about the project, and visit our calendar on page 8 for a full listing of activities available to you during the month of March.

Ken Brecher
President

Quick Hits

As we spend the month of March celebrating the fundamental importance of language—both in Southern California and beyond—and the ever-evolving influence of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), here are a few fun facts about the varied ways we are using dictionaries today.

**The Los Angeles Times**

is cited 190 times as the first venue in which a new word or usage is recorded in the *OED*.

**Did you know**

that all Los Angeles Public Library cardholders have free access to the online *OED*? No matter where you are in the city, the state, or the world at large, visit lapl.org for access.

**“The English language is nobody’s special property. It is the property of the imagination: it is the property of the language itself.”**

—Poet Derek Walcott

**The Los Angeles Public Library’s International Languages Department**

houses dictionaries, phrase books, easy readers, and language learning materials in more than 500 languages.

The collection includes:

— Languages with unique alphabets, such as Armenian and Georgian
— American Indian languages, such as Cherokee and Navajo
— Asian languages, such as Hindi and Urdu
— African languages, such as Swahili and Igbo
— Pacific Island languages, such as Hawaiian and Maori

The International Languages department also houses materials to learn English — print, audio, and video — with explanations in the users’ own native languages, as well as multilingual materials for citizenship preparation. The popular language learning programs are Pimsleur, Living Language and Berlitz, as well as the online databases Mango and Powerspeak.

**Californian, adj. and n.**

Pronunciation: /kælɪˈfɔːnɪən/  
Etymology: < California n.A. adj.

Of or belonging to, native or peculiar to, California; esp. in the names of species of birds, beasts, and plants.
Head of the Class

With record-breaking numbers of programs, participants, and a rising Membership, the Library Foundation saw unprecedented levels of success last year—including the support of an innovative educational pilot program now expanding across the country.

On a Tuesday morning this past January, Central Library’s Taper Auditorium filled with the flashes of cameras, the uplifting swell of “Pomp and Circumstance,” and a royal blue tide of caps and gowns. But this was not your typical graduation ceremony.

“This is a city of second chances—Los Angeles defines itself that way. We are not a city that cares where you come from, or where your parents come from, or what your first language was, the color of your skin, your gender,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti addressing the first class of 28 graduates from the Los Angeles Public Library’s pioneering Career Online High School. “What we care about is your dreams and what you want to accomplish in life. You’ve already shown yourself to be people who embrace the idea of a second chance. This library system was there at the right moment to be the enabler of your hard work. We opened the door up, but you today have walked through that door,” said the Mayor.

Mayor Eric Garcetti’s Advice to Graduates:
1. Be fearless
2. Be humble
3. Learn how to listen
4. Lead with love

In an effort to address the spreading epidemic of high school dropouts—nearly 40 million adults across the country and half of the adult population in L.A.—the Library teamed up with Career Online High School, an 18-credit, career-based high school completion program designed to prepare students for the workforce. This first-ever collaboration between an accredited online program and a public library offers adult learners better access to a flexible, supportive environment for completing their degree.

“This program is the dramatic and powerful example of how the Library is all about lifelong learning and empowerment and how public libraries can play a very important role in the workforce and economic development,” said City Librarian John Szabo at the graduation ceremony.

Since kicking off in March 2014, over 150 students have enrolled in the program. “It’s beneficial for numerous reasons—from helping students go on to college programs, apply for scholarships, get promotions at current jobs, or learn new skills for their careers—we’ve witnessed how it can provide new opportunities and instill a feeling of accomplishment and self-worth in the participants,” explained Brian Cunningham, librarian and project coordinator for Career Online High School.

Through the help of the Library Foundation, every student accepted to the program receives a grant to cover his or her studies. Antoine Merritt, one of the graduates, had struggled to find an affordable, accredited program that could accommodate his work schedule. “I was promised a promotion at work into a new department after finishing his online high school degree in September 2014 was greenlighted to begin training in his new department while pursuing a degree in electronics at Pierce College. He’s also become an ambassador for the Library’s program—his niece just began working on her high school degree last month. “This program is changing my whole family’s life and giving us tools to help us grow and thrive,” he said.

Gina Ruiz—the grandmother of a current high school student—has been an office manager for over 20 years, and between work and family never had the time to complete her degree. “There was always this barrier of not having the diploma. It kept me from certain promotions, attending college, and applying for scholarships,” Ruiz explained. After completing the program last August, she’s now enrolled at Northeastern University College of Professional Studies and hopes to go on to receive his Master’s degree and a Ph.D. The Library’s support of Ruiz’s education has continued beyond Career Online High School. A teacher from the program along with Cunningham wrote Ruiz letters of recommendation and she recently received a scholarship for college. “Also, she has learned how to use other Library resources for her college research papers.

The program serves a wide range of student needs. David Villena, originally from Mexico City, graduated from high school there, but when he moved to the U.S. in 2000, he could not find a program that would allow him to transfer his coursework and complete a high school degree. On a visit to his neighborhood library, he learned about Career Online High School. “What else could I ask for? It was love at first sight,” said Villena, who completed his degree last April. Villena credits the Library’s encouragement as laying the foundation for taking future steps in his education. “An overall benefit of taking this online program is the fact that I came into contact with a new way to learn—that has given me a new tool to approach other online courses.”

The program is also now being modeled at 49 other libraries across this country and is expanding across the state. “We’re honored that the program that we helped design has been implemented at so many other library systems, continuing its impact. In fact, I’m currently mentoring 12 other library systems throughout the state as they work on rolling out Career Online High School later this year,” says Candice Mack, the interim principal librarian of Young Adult Services and project manager of Career Online High School.

Beyond the successful implementation of this forward-thinking pilot program, this past year has stood out as a banner year for the Library Foundation—from growing the Cybernaut program and updating Student Zones across the city, to engaging thousands of Angelenos in dialogue with luminary figures like Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, and beloved storyteller Judy Blume at ALOUD. As you look through the following pages of the newsletter, you’ll see an exciting breakthrough of the Foundation’s 2014-2015 Fiscal Year activities, and how we are ensuring the Los Angeles Public Library thrives in the present, and for generations to come.

“If it were not for the Library, I wouldn’t have gotten my high school diploma—I would have just let it go. It has given me the confidence that I was lacking because I was missing a big part of my educational goals.”

—Angie Velasquez, graduate of Career Online High School

Spring 2016 213.228.7500 lfla.org
Between July 2014 and June 2015, the Library Foundation expanded its support of the enrichment, educational, and cultural programs across all 73 Los Angeles Public Libraries, offered free of charge to millions of adults, teens, and children.

HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED

STUDENT SMART
4,140
Teens at 57 branches prepared for college through free workshops and PSAT, SAT, and ACT practice exams. ↑70%

STUDENT ZONES
29,117
Students provided dedicated space, materials, and in-person assistance to complete homework assignments at 28 branches.

LIVE HOMEWORK HELP
38,807
Individual online tutoring sessions took place last year. ↑31%

WE READ TOGETHER
123,935
Adults and children participated in pre-literacy workshops and story-times. ↑44%

ENGAGING THE IMAGINATION

ALOUD AT CENTRAL LIBRARY
10,962
People attended 51 stimulating conversations and performances.

2,361
Attended special off-site programs throughout the city, featuring Colm Tóibín and Rachel Kushner, Carlos Santana, Patton Oswalt, David Alan Grier, and Judy Blume.

Program podcasts and videos were downloaded 175,719 times. As of July 2015, the ALOUD Vimeo Channel included 104 archival videos. ↑60%

LITERATURE THROUGH AN L.A. LENS
The Odyssey Project presented more than 70 events that took place in libraries and cultural institutions across the city.

DIGITIZATION
The Library’s Collections were accessed more than 800,000 times online.

LOST & FOUND AT THE MOVIES
In its second year, the series celebrated the vitality of film culture with the legendary Buck Henry, film critic Kenneth Turan, Academy Award-winning filmmaker Pawel Pawlikowski, and more.

EXPLORING THE COLLECTIONS
To Live and Dine in L.A. highlighted the Library’s collection of more than 9,000 menus.

With a book and exhibit at the Central Library that was visited more than 20,000 times, over 100 programs occurred at 25 branches.

INVESTING IN LIFELONG LEARNING

ADULT LITERACY SERVICES
20,163
Adults at 21 literacy centers worked with tutors and attended classes. ↑54%

HEALTH MATTERS
21,461
Patrons received resources, knowledge, and guidance on health-related topics.

CYBERNAUTS
75,000
Patrons received computer assistance and were taught to use the Library’s electronic resources, create email accounts, and complete job applications.

FULL STEAM AHEAD
18,558
Children, teens, and adults participated in free science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM)-related programs and workshops at 24 target branches. Expanded from a pilot program at 13 branches to fully fledged at 50+ branches.

NATIONAL MEDAL FOR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICE
In June, First Lady Michelle Obama presented the Los Angeles Public Library with the nation’s highest honor given each year to five libraries and five museums for service to the community.

“We won the Oscars of libraries!”
—Mayor Eric Garcetti

GIVING BACK

MEMBERSHIP
Throughout the Fiscal Year 2014–2015, 3,700 Library Foundation Members raised over $500,000 to transform the Los Angeles Public Library. ↑23%

THE STAY HOME AND READ A BOOK BALL
With the help of Chair Junot Díaz, the coolest fundraiser of the year raised $109,656 in March 2015—a new high for the campaign.

THE YOUNG LITERATI
285
Young Literati Members
The 2015 Annual Toast in March raised nearly $75,000 for Full STEAM Ahead programming and included the largest-ever single gift to an Annual Toast.

The inaugural, wildly successful Young Literati Family Day in February engaged our youngest library supporters with games, face painting, and storytime with comedian and actor Paul Scheer.

FOURTH ANNUAL BOOK DROP BASH
Became the official after-party of the Los Angeles Times Book Prizes at Central Library, exclusively for Library Foundation Members and Los Angeles Times Festival of Books authors.

FULL STEAM AHEAD
18,558
Children, teens, and adults participated in enrichment programs through their summer break.

GRAMMY-winning band Ozomatli released the first-ever theme song and video in this program’s 80+ year history.
# Financials

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2015

### OPERATING ACTIVITY: SUPPORT AND REVENUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UNRESTRICTED</th>
<th>/board designated</th>
<th>temporarily restricted</th>
<th>permanently restricted</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$1,319,648</td>
<td>$2,375,607</td>
<td>$700,412</td>
<td>$5,410,667</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund-raising events - net of direct expenses of $418,288</td>
<td>$43,143</td>
<td>$128,940</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$176,283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store revenue, net of discounts</td>
<td>$441,090</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$441,090</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$5,416,461</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$3,597,847</td>
<td>$702,412</td>
<td>$6,216,720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTION/DESIGNATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endowment appropriations</td>
<td>$1,038,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of donor intent</td>
<td>$3,315,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,353,633</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHANGE IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>amount %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$1,328,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund-raising events – net of direct expenses of $188,688</td>
<td>545,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store revenues, net of discounts</td>
<td>544,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Support and Revenue</strong></td>
<td>2,418,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment appropriations</td>
<td>($466,045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor intent satisfied</td>
<td>($3,315,453)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>($3,780,498)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>5,422,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>($229,788)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REVENUE AMOUNT

| revenue amount % |
|---|---|
| Corporate | $189,770 | 4% |
| Foundations | $2,088,645 | 30% |
| Individuals | $1,913,225 | 28% |
| Government | $644,046 | 9% |
| Other Revenue | $448,921 | 7% |
| **Revenue Subtotal** | $5,382,037 | 78% |
| Endowment, Investment, Other Income | $958,104 | 14% |
| **Library Store** | $544,290 | 8% |
| **Total Revenue** | $6,884,431 | 100% |

### EXPENSE AMOUNT

| expense amount % |
|---|---|
| Investing in Lifelong Learning | $1,889,770 | 28% |
| Engaging the Imagination | $1,704,060 | 18% |
| Helping Students Succeed | $1,245,097 | 18% |
| General and Administrative | $543,660 | 8% |
| Fundraising | $892,027 | 13% |
| Library Store | $583,914 | 8% |
| **Total Expenses** | $6,858,528 | 100% |

### CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

| change in net assets % |
|---|---|
| Endowment, Investment, Other Income | 14% |
| Library Store | 8% |
| **Total Revenue** | 0% |

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>assets</th>
<th>June 30, 2015</th>
<th>June 30, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$922,100</td>
<td>$751,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>37,313,067</td>
<td>37,051,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pledges receivable</td>
<td>1,139,843</td>
<td>1,750,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library store inventory</td>
<td>95,831</td>
<td>117,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and equipment, net</td>
<td>217,208</td>
<td>86,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests in charitable remainder trusts</td>
<td>446,842</td>
<td>464,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>31,390</td>
<td>53,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>$40,166,281</td>
<td>$40,274,473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Liabilities and Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>liabilities</th>
<th>amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable</td>
<td>$922,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued expenses</td>
<td>$46,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>389,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>440,434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>unrestricted</th>
<th>unrestricted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available for general operations</td>
<td>1,866,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board-directed endowment</td>
<td>16,670,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$1,866,354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE OF REVENUE AND EXPENSE AMOUNTS

| revenue amount % |
|---|---|
| Corporate | 4% |
| Foundations | 30% |
| Individuals | 28% |
| Government | 9% |
| Other Revenue | 7% |
| Endowment, Investment, Other Income | 14% |
| Library Store | 8% |

| expense amount % |
|---|---|
| Investing in Lifelong Learning | 28% |
| Engaging the Imagination | 18% |
| Helping Students Succeed | 18% |
| General and Administrative | 8% |
| Fundraising | 13% |
| Library Store | 8% |

### Change in Net Assets

| change in net assets amount % |
|---|---|
| Endowment, Investment, Other Income | 14% |
| Library Store | 8% |
| **Total Revenue** | 0% |

## Revenue and Expenses

- **Corporate:** 4%
- **Foundations:** 30%
- **Individuals:** 28%
- **Government:** 9%
- **Other Revenue:** 7%
- **Endowment, Investment, Other Income:** 14%
- **Library Store:** 8%

- **Expenses:**
  - **Investing in Lifelong Learning:** 28%
  - **Engaging the Imagination:** 18%
  - **Helping Students Succeed:** 18%
  - **General and Administrative:** 8%
  - **Fundraising:** 13%
  - **Library Store:** 8%

- **Change in Net Assets:**
  - **Increase in Net Assets:** $25,903
  - **% of Library Foundation’s Net Assets:** 0.07%
Hollywood Is a Verb

Los Angeles Tackles the Oxford English Dictionary

In the third installment of a city-wide project to reconsider classic texts through a contemporary Southern California lens, the Library Foundation and the Los Angeles Public Library will celebrate the power of language by taking on the wordiest, most epic, essential, and mother of all books—the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). Throughout March, over 60+ programs at 13 branch libraries across the city will engage Angelenos through conversations and events to illuminate how dictionaries enrich our lives today (check the calendar on pgs. 8-9 for details.)

Beyond providing us a system for naming, ordering, and comprehending words, the OED also tells the story of how language adapts and changes over time. In a specially commissioned essay, USC Professor of Linguistics and Law Edward Finegan takes us through the meticulous, yet highly democratic process of how the OED is edited, evolves, and embodies a living, breathing community of words.

The Oxford English Dictionary: A Great Read in Alphabetical Order and Otherwise

By Edward Finegan

“Don’t you love the Oxford Dictionary?” David Bowie exclaimed to an interviewer in 1999. Then, in tribute, he added, “When I first read it, I thought it was a really really long poem about everything.” The OED is really long. And it is about everything—everything with a name. Nor is it a stretch to regard it as poetic; for one thing, its most commonly cited source of illustrative quotations is Shakespeare. While David Bowie may not have read the entire OED, a former furniture mover named Ammon Shea has read it all, and judged it “a great read.” In its 21,730 pages he found all “the human emotions and experiences…just as they would be in any fine work of literature,” but, he said, in the OED those emotions and experiences “just happen to be alphabetized.”

Perhaps Bowie and Shea suffered from—or were blessed with—a form of onomatomania. Other “onomatomaniacs” regularly grab the headlines. News outlets run stories about the word of the year—WOTY—chosen by one organization or another. Members of the American Dialect Society recently anointed them as 2015 WOTY. An 800-year-old pronoun, its striking service as a gender-neutral singular pronoun—a substitute for the gendered pronouns he and she—captured the admiration of language scholars. If dictionaries are alphabetical listings of words, we might ask what range of expressions are eligible to enter the Oxford English Dictionary. To address that question, let’s look at the most recent updates.

“Besides simple words like they, the American Dialect Society accepts compounds and phrases, even hashtags and emojis, as WOTY candidates. Last year the hashtag #blacklivesmatter won the vote, and two years earlier the compound word hashtag won.”

About 500 revisions were announced late in 2015. Words like improvise, locavore, phablet, subcommittee, and truther were added, along with the compounds fireplug, attack ad, bankruptcy, commitment ceremony and commitment ring, exit interview and exit polling, fire hydrant and fire sale, granary chic and granary gear, improvised explosive device, location scout, strength training, and true believer. Among the phrases added were to fight fire with fire and to be firing on all cylinders. Some additions capture new English, expressions appearing only recently in print: locavore, in 2005; phablet, in 2010. Truther may seem fresh, but it’s over a century old. Not all announced revisions represent innovation, then. Bankruptcy dates to 1930; improvise to 1830; fireplug to 1850. For a surprising number of additions, the OED is catching up. Even the grandest dictionaries are linguistic laggards, not leaders.

You may wonder how editors decide what gets into the OED— and when. Well, for all of today’s computing power and
electronically available language materials, lexicography remains a human enterprise. The OED is a historical dictionary, endeavoring to document the development of all English words from their beginnings to the present day. When the project was conceived in the nineteenth century, its visionaries couldn’t grasp the labor and time its “New English Dictionary” would require. The first published segment, letters “A” to “Ant,” appeared in 1884, and by the time the final segment appeared in 1928, words at the head of the alphabet were outdated—or missing. Changed by World War I, the English-speaking world and its dictionary needed to reflect a new reality (military and war terms; cultural terms).

To help create the first OED, volunteer readers around the world submitted slips of paper with illustrative quotations typically containing a sentence with a single underlined word. The same practice—relying on submissions via the Internet—provides an authoritative basis for OED definitions, and anyone can furnish quotations to meet editors’ calls. Contributors tackle newspapers and diaries; specialist magazines (treating, say, jazz or pop culture) and journals (treating, say, medicine); cook books and movie scripts.

Like other dictionary makers, the OED editors also troll through other dictionaries—such as the Dictionary of American Regional English—to identify overlooked words. As well, the vast resources of the Internet help identify words and senses and provide illustrative quotations. In fact, the primary data upon which the OED relies in its definitions are quotations. Our inquiries of any online dictionary—the words we type into its search engine—can provide a heads-up about words missing from the dictionary, and editors can then seek published examples of them.

Over its lifetime English has borrowed tens of thousands of words from scores of languages, and readers of the online OED can discover that among the many words borrowed from American or Mexican Spanish are hoysewop, abalone, Apache, chili, charro, Chicano and Chicana, copee, grope, and stampede. Given the prominence of the Latin majority in Los Angeles, it’s no accident that the Spanish word quinceneara first appeared in a Van Nuys English-language newspaper (in 1972). Los Angeles also has a significant Persian-speaking community, and directly or through an intermediate language Persian has contributed words, including ag达尔, bakshesh, bazaar, caravanserai, cummerbund, dervish, dinar, divan, hali, hinak, lazar, moccasin, nontrop, sevrucker, shah, shahet, taffeta, and zarbe. English has also borrowed from Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Latin, the Philippine languages, and Turkish, as well as French, German, Italian, and others. Coming from Hawaiian is waiiki (shortened from wikikiki ‘quick quick’), while borrowed directly or indirectly from Native American languages are bicksee, hominy, moccasin, shuk, sockeye, tepee, tobogon, tomahawk, witchipoo, woodchuck, and place names like Illinois, Oklahoma, and Malibu.

To represent a living language in a vibrant world-wide multi-culture demands a dynamic dictionary. With announcements every three months of revisions to a third edition, the Oxford English Dictionary puts its vitality and continuing relevance to the English-speaking world on full display.

Visit theoed.oup.com to read the full essay, along with all the details of Hollywood Is a Verb: Los Angeles Tackles the Oxford English Dictionary.

Or join the conversation on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook with #dictionaryLA

Hollywood Is a Verb support provided by:
WHH Foundation
Skoll Foundation
Participant Media
Nguyen argues that Asian American intellectuals have idealized Asian America, ignoring its saturation with capitalist practices.

“I am a spy, a sleeper, a spook, a man of two faces. Perhaps not surprisingly, I am also a man of two minds. I am not some misunderstood mutant from a comic book or horror movie, although some have treated me as such. I am simply able to see any issue from both sides,” begins Viet Thanh Nguyen’s debut novel, The Sympathizer. Nguyen understands a lot about navigating dual worlds. Born in Vietnam, he came to the United States as a refugee in 1975 with his family. The Sympathizer—which topped over 30 book-of-the-year lists for 2015 and won the Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction—is set during the aftermath of the fall of Saigon and follows an undercover communist agent posing as a captain in the Southern Vietnamese Army. Nguyen, an associate professor of English and American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, is deeply interested in illuminating the Vietnamese perspective of a war that has been mostly told through the lens of American culture. By exploring these themes through fiction, he is also the author of two works of nonfiction: Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America, and Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War, which will be published this April. Before sharing the ALOUD stage this spring with his mentor Maxine Hong Kingston, we asked Nguyen about the challenges of confronting history through storytelling.

What first made you want to write about Vietnam?

Nguyen: I read and watched a great deal of American literature and film about the Vietnam War as I was growing up. By the time I entered college, I knew that one of the signal features of this body of work was that it did not include many meaningful roles for Vietnamese people. In other words, what Americans called the Vietnam War was really, for them, an American war. The Vietnamese were unimportant except as the backdrop for a civil war in the American soul, where Americans fought each other. Eventually I realized that this was a war fought in Vietnam that had cost three million Vietnamese lives (compared to 58,000 American ones). In effect, this was a war where, for the first time in history, the losers got to write the history of the war for the world. I determined to both insert Vietnamese perspectives into this American narrative and to challenge the assumptions of American culture as well.

How has your perspective on the history of this war evolved over the course of your writing?

Nguyen: At first, I thought that what I wanted to do was to tell Vietnamese stories and fill in the gaps of American stories about the Vietnam War, Vietnam, and Vietnamese people. Eventually I realized that this was a limited and mistaken ambition. The Vietnam War was not only set in Vietnam and involved Vietnamese people. It was a war that began well before American involvement and lasted well after Americans left. It cost 3 million Laotian and Cambodian lives as a direct consequence of Vietnamese and American actions. Although my novel doesn’t really deal with this, my nonfiction work, Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War, explores Laos and Cambodia as well as South Korea. South Korea was poorer than South Vietnam in the 1960s, but used American payments for its troops and chabos (Hyundai, Daewoo, and the like) to begin its transformation into a global power. All this is part of the history of the Vietnam War as a total war that many would rather forget, or know nothing about.

What are the differences for you in exploring this war through fiction versus nonfiction? What have you learned from each creative endeavor?

Nguyen: In fiction, I can say all kinds of things that would be far too difficult for me to say in nonfiction. In nonfiction, I need footnotes and documentation to support even the smallest claim. In fiction, I can say the things that are the most provocative and leave them there for the reader to confront. That’s very liberating. Still, my fiction is deeply informed by the years of research I did for my nonfiction, both in terms of concrete work on Southeast Asian and American memories, and in terms of the theoretical thinking I did about memory, ethics, individuality, and representation. All those ideas that are implicit in my fiction, helping me immeasurably to make certain kinds of aesthetic decisions, are explicit in my nonfiction.

My nonfiction was shaped by my fiction, too. I took everything I had learned about narrative, characterization, plot, rhythm, and style and brought it into writing my nonfiction, which is infused with the emotion, passion, and intuition that are key to fiction. I mean for The Sympathizer and Nothing Ever Dies to be read side by side as the fictional and scholarly bookends of a critical project about our capacity to be both human and inhuman at the same time.

At ALOUD, you’ll be in conversation with the masterful Maxine Hong Kingston. What’s your relationship to Maxine and how has her writing influenced you? What do you look forward to speaking with her about?

Nguyen: Maxine was my first creative writing instructor in college. I applied for her nonfiction writing seminar and had no idea what I was getting myself into. She saw thirteen other students. Either she has forgotten or she has charitably never mentioned it to me, but I was a terrible student. I would fall asleep every single day in class, even when I was sitting only a couple of feet away from her. Eventually I realized I needed to inject myself with caffeine immediately before and during class. At the end of the semester, she wrote me a note and recommended that I seek help from the university’s excellent counseling services, as I seemed deeply alienated. She was most likely right. I mention this to point out that college students shouldn’t always be judged too harshly. I look the other way on the occasions when students fall asleep in my class. I have faith that teaching is a long-term, unending process, and that many students may not even be cognizant of it at the time.

In Maxine’s case, I have found her work to be persistently powerful even though in college I found it somewhat bewildering. I use The Woman Warrior every time I teach an Asian American literature course and think that it is an important template for ethical storytelling. I cite that and China Men’s “The Brother in Vietnam” and The Fifth Book of Peace in my forthcoming Nothing Ever Dies. Because throughout these works there is a consistent critique of power and an idealistic demand for peace that sets a high mark for any writer and critic who deals with war. In Maxine’s writing there is an awareness that war is always a total experience, one that works through the complexity of the people, not just the actions of soldiers, generals, and politicians. I want to talk to her about what it means to be a writer and an activist, how to think through the specific demands of a piece of writing while also thinking globally, and how to work at the seam of art and politics in an American publishing and writing world where that conjunction is often devalued.

As a writer, scholar, and critic, you conduct a lot of research. How have libraries shaped your work and inspired a love for books?

Nguyen: The San Jose Public Library system was my second home as a child, particularly the Main Library (now called the Martin Luther King Jr. Library). My refugee parents worked 12 to 14 hours, seven days a week, and I saw little of them. I heard even less, as they were too tired to talk to me and my native tongue had withered to almost nothing. I had adopted English and took great comfort in it. I spent hours in the library and by ten years of age was taking the bus to and from the library by myself every weekend. I read everything there, including things I shouldn’t have. I read above my age level, from All Quiet on the Western Front when I was in the sixth grade, to Larry Heinemann’s brutal Vietnam War novel Close Quarters when I was an adolescent. Scents from that book scarred my memory. I hated that book until I had to write my own novel and realized that Heinemann was right—if you are dealing with atrocity, then don’t editorialize, don’t sentimentalize. Make the reader feel the hurt. Make the comfortable uncomfortable. Libraries are the great repository of uncomfortable ideas, and I benefitted from the freedom to roam and expose myself to them.

When it came to my own novel, I made great use of the Los Angeles Central Library’s resources. There were books on the fall of Saigon, on the making of Apocalypse Now, on the landscape and cultures of the Philippines, and on tourism in Southeast Asia—few of which were available in my university’s library. That research fed two of the more memorable set pieces in the novel, the opening that depicts the fall of Saigon and a long passage later on that deals with the making of a fictional Vietnam War film epic in the Philippines. How was I to know that the set dresser on Apocalypse Now dug up real corpses to decorate a scene (or so it was rumored)? That’s the kind of stuff I found in the library.
March

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 7:30 PM
HAMMER MUSEUM
Connecting the Dots: Making Meaning of the World
James Gleick and Lera Boroditsky
In conversation with Margaret Wertheim

SUNDAY, MARCH 6
Stay Home and Read a Book Ball

TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 7:30 PM
HAMMER MUSEUM
Strange Sounds from the Bookshelf
An OED-inspired concert with works by Nico Muhly, Anne LeBaron, and Scott Worthington

TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 7:15 PM
Empire of Words: An Unsentimental Journey to the Birth of the OED
Jamaica Kincaid and Sarah Ogilvie
In conversation

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 7:15 PM
When Women Win: EMILY’s List and the Rise of Women in American Politics
Ellen R. Malcolm
In conversation with journalist Ann Friedman

SATURDAY, MARCH 19
Co-presented with Clockshop
Radio Imagination: Octavia E. Butler’s Los Angeles
Panel Discussion with Ben Caldwell, Ayana A. H. Jamieson, Douglas Kearney, and Nisi Shawl
In conversation with author Tisa Bryant with DJ Lymnie Denise

April

MONDAY, APRIL 4, 7:15 PM
H is for Hawk
Helen Macdonald
In conversation with Louise Steinman, curator, ALOUD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 7:15 PM
At The Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being and Apricot Cocktails
Sarah Bakewell
In conversation with author David L. Ulin

SATURDAY, APRIL 9
Book Drop Bash
The official after-party of the Los Angeles Times Book Prizes

MONDAY, APRIL 11, 7:15 PM
Dictionaries and the Bending of Language
John McWhorter and Mark Z. Danielewski
In conversation with screenwriter and USC film professor, Howard A. Rodman

ALOUD thanks its media sponsors

ALOUD thanks its generous sponsors

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

Smart in your world Arent Fox

Credit: Patti Perret
Credit: Kenneth Noland
May

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 7:15 PM
Spain In Our Hearts: Americans in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939
Adam Hochschild
In conversation with historian Jon Wiener

MONDAY, MAY 2, 7:15 PM
Writing Our Future
Readings from Graduate Writing Programs of the Southland
With students from CalArts, Otis, UCI, UCR, USC
Adam Hochschild
In conversation with historian Jon Wiener

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 7:15 PM
Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life
William Finnegan
In conversation with author David Rensin

MONDAY, MAY 2, 7:15 PM
The Meursault Investigation: Reworking Camus’ The Stranger
Kamel Daoud
In conversation with author Percival Everett
Bi-lingual, French/English

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 7:15 PM
The Bricks That Built the Houses
Kate Tempest
In conversation with Neelanjana Banerjee

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 7:15 PM
Two Writers Reflect on War and Peace
Maxine Hong Kingston and Viet Thanh Nguyen
In conversation

THURSDAY, MAY 26, 7:15 PM
Two Walkers, Two Writers, Two Cities
Vivian Gornick and David L. Ulin
In conversation with Louise Steinman, curator, ALOUD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 7:15 PM
The Further Adventures of Mr. Cilantro Man
U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera
In conversation with Tom Lutz, editor-in-chief, Los Angeles Review of Books

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 11:00AM
Council Luncheon: Leslie Stahl

This spring, we present programs from the following departments:

THE LIBRARY STORE
On Wheels events
3/6 @ LA Zine Fest
3/12 @ Bookfest Grand Park
3/19 @ Fig Jam
3/20 @ Artist & Fleas
3/25 @ Burbank Ladies & Gents Night Out
4/9 @ Festival of Books
4/10 @ Festival of Books
4/30 is Independent Book Store Day

For more information on these programs
ALOUD:
lfla.org/aloud or 213.292.6254
General Programs:
lfla.org/calendar or 213.292.6242

Young Literati cocktails to follow Leadership Circle reception before program

Location
Unless otherwise indicated, programs take place at:
Richard J. Riordan Central Library
Mark Taper Auditorium
Downtown Los Angeles
630 W. Fifth Street
Los Angeles, California 90071
Not printed at City expense

Additional support provided by

The Stay Home and Read a Book Ball™

Sharon Oxborough
The Estate of Suzanne Aran
Donna and Martin J. Wolff
And individual Library Foundation Members

Spring 2016 213.228.7500 lfla.org 9
**Live From The Library**

**Highlights from the ALOUD winter season**

- Patti Smith treats the ALOUD audience to a surprise performance at The Orpheum Theatre after discussing her newest book, *M Train*.
- Poets and longtime friends Elizabeth Alexander and Kevin Young share a moment after sharing the stage at ALOUD.

**Highlights from The Council’s winter season**

- Author Lian Dolan and friend of The Council Luanne Wells.
- Council Members Joan Hotchkis, Susy Niven, Ames Cushing, and Michael Niven.
- Council President Ellen Lipson and author Jon Meacham.

**Highlights from the Leadership Circle**

- Leadership Circle Members Dawn Baillie, author Michael Cunningham, June Dowad, and LFLA president Ken Brecher.
- Leadership Circle Member Ruth Simon and City Librarian John F. Szabo.
- Leadership Circle Member Laurene Harding Rivas and Young Literati Member Luis Rivas.

**Highlights from the Young Literati’s 2nd Annual Family Day**

- Actor/Comedian Paul Scheer reads aloud to the crowd of excited kids.
- Library Foundation Board Member Darren Jackson, Tatiana Jackson, and son Miles enjoy the festivities.
- Young patron Owen gets excited about signing up for his first Library card.
It is clearly evident that we recognize donors of $1,000 or more who made contributions to the Library Foundation of Los Angeles from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015. These generous donors are instrumental in helping provide critical support to the Los Angeles Public Library for free programs, resources and services to the nearly 4 million people it serves.

Donor Listing

We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of each name and gift level. If a mistake is made please accept our apology and let us know by contacting Rebecca Shehee at RebeccaShehee@lfla.org or call 213.292.6250.

Spring 2016
The Library Foundation of Los Angeles provides critical support to the Los Angeles Public Library resulting in free programs, resources and services available to adults, children and youth in Los Angeles. We accomplish this mission through fundraising, advocacy and innovative programs that strengthen the Library and promote greater awareness of its valuable resources.

Support free access to information and the civic, cultural, and educational core of our community.

Become a Member of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles to strengthen the Los Angeles Public Library!

lfla.org
213.228.7500

SOUND

6 a. To approach (a person) with conversation or inquiries intended to elicit his opinion or feeling on some matter; to examine or question in an indirect manner. Also with one...

Support free access to information and the civic, cultural, and educational core of our community.

Become a Member of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles to strengthen the Los Angeles Public Library!

lfla.org
213.228.7500

SOUND

6 a. To approach (a person) with conversation or inquiries intended to elicit his opinion or feeling on some matter; to examine or question in an indirect manner. Also with one...

Support free access to information and the civic, cultural, and educational core of our community.

Become a Member of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles to strengthen the Los Angeles Public Library!

lfla.org
213.228.7500