

## Fall 2004, Volume 37, Number 2

### **Carrying Across into Silence: Brian Friel's Translations**

*Suzy Clarkson Holstein*

The occupiers must know the land they occupy, and they know it by "translating" it—literally "carrying it across" from the unfamiliar to the familiar.

### **Blue Angels Meet Dying Animals: Textual and Sexual Subversion in the Clinton-Era Academic Novel**

*Jesse Kavadlo*

Despite the exterior rhetoric against political correctness, these novels self-consciously suggest and understand that the professors use women, and sexuality codes, as instruments of self-immolation.

### **The Master of Arts Degree**

*A cluster co-edited by Anne Clark Bartlett and Pete Vandenberg*

#### **Is It Terminal? Re-Evaluating the Master's Degree**

*Anne Clark Bartlett*

Neither the vast majority of graduate students nor the profession as a whole is well served when all holders of baccalaureate degrees must commit to a PhD program in order to pursue advanced humanistic studies.

#### **Graduate Degree on the Margins: Educational and Professional Concerns of the MA Student**

*Erika Wright*

As I attempted to define the MA and examine what it means for others, both on my own campus and across the country, I began to realize that there may, in fact, not be a clear definition, and that this ambiguity is one of the strengths of this degree.

#### **What a Difference an MA Makes**

*Gina Brandolino*

No one would say I am really trucking through my graduate school years, and it is not difficult, and not really inaccurate, to blame the terminal MA for some of my slowness. Not really inaccurate, but a bit unfair, because without the terminal MA, I would not be in a PhD program at all right now.

#### **Talking the Talk: The MA and Academic Language**

*John Pendell*

The acquisition of the language of literary studies can be likened to the acquisition of any second language. Although there are no native speakers of this tongue, there are certainly those so proficient that they seem like they've been bilingual since birth.

### **Contingent Performances: Between the Acts of Adjunct Faculty**

*Erin MacKenna*

Of course during graduate school I felt the power of the written word in theoretical terms, but it wasn't until I read the confessions of women in my neighborhood's homeless shelter and felt the dignity that accompanied them that I truly knew the immense humanizing effect of language.

### **With Ink the Color of Industrial Blue**

*Ray Salazar*

Where I grew up, people didn't talk about writing for a living. In a neighborhood where immigration issues took precedence, writing simply didn't fit in.

### **The Loop**

A column that reveals how the scholarship of M/MLA members has transformed syllabi for the courses that departments require of their majors

### **Students Coming to Voice: The Transformative Influences of Feminist Pedagogies**

*Kathleen M. Torrens and Jeannette E. Riley*

We believe that an active feminist pedagogy, which often violates traditional beliefs that teachers should be non-biased, engages students and helps them learn to debate issues intensely, challenge one another's ideas, and discover what they are committed to and why.

### **Book Reviews**

#### ***Fault Lines and Controversies in the Study of Seventeenth-Century English Literature. Edited by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth. (John-Paul Spiro)***

This volume lacks coherence and consistent quality, but in its overarching concern for the spiritual over the economic and its general lack of "theory" as such provides an accurate and heartening snapshot of the state of the field today.

#### ***Approaches to Teaching Rousseau's Confessions and Reveries of the Solitary Walker. Edited by John C. O'Neal and Ourida Mostefai. (Anne E. Duggan)***

The twenty essays making up the bulk of the volume take us on an exploration of Rousseau's autobiographical writing. Together they allow us to consider first, Rousseau's place within the history of autobiography; second, the place of his autobiographical writing within his oeuvre; and third, the innovations he made through his writing in the construction of self and authorship.

#### ***Approaches to Teaching Gothic Fiction: The British and American Traditions. Edited by Diane Long Hoeveler and Tamar Heller. (Allen Grove)***

Many of the essays in the collection, whether explicitly or implicitly, demonstrate how difficult it is to define "Gothic"; by the end one finds the twenty-nine scholars who contributed to the volume discussing writers as disparate as Harriet Jacobs, William Godwin, Toni Morrison, Margaret Atwood, Shakespeare, and Mary Wollstonecraft.

***The Poetics of National and Racial Identity in Nineteenth-Century American Literature.* By John D. Kerkering. (Ken Egan, Jr.)**

By shifting the focus from essentialist arguments based on "blood" to arguments based on textual features, Kerkering aims to reinforce the importance of literary history, while at the same time chastening it for its misdeeds.

***Truth Stranger than Fiction: Race, Realism and the U.S. Literary Marketplace.* By Augusta Rohrbach. (Julie Husband)**

The centrality of the cash economy in abolitionist writing has been overlooked, Rohrbach posits, because of the contemporary focus on Frederick Douglass's slave narrative.

***Elizabeth Barrett Browning.* By Simon Avery and Rebecca Stott. (SueAnn Schatz)**

Avery and Stott's objective is to demonstrate how the premier Victorian woman poet partook in the literary conversations concerned with political and social issues of the nineteenth century.

***Consumerism and American Girls' Literature, 1860-1940.* By Peter Stoneley. (Beth A. Fisher)**

Girls' stories, Stoneley contends, encouraged readers to understand material consumption as a means of gaining social and cultural power; it was the girl-heroine's capacity to embody and ultimately resolve middle-class anxieties about wealth, social legitimacy, and artificiality, moreover, that accounts for the success of girls' fiction in the literary marketplace.

***Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy's Anna Karenina.* Edited by Liza Knapp and Amy Mandelker. (Chris Bell)**

Knapp and Mandelker's astute selections and overall stewardship have resulted in a thought-provoking text that will most assuredly aid instructors and students in unpacking the famous "labyrinth of linkages" that lie at the heart of *Anna Karenina*.

***Modernism, Ireland and the Erotics of Memory.* By Nicholas Andrew Miller. (Mary Burke)**

Far from deliberately discounting historical continuity in the pursuit of innovation for its own sake, literary modernists (and "Irish counter-memorialists" such as W. B. Yeats and Joyce, in particular) have incessantly circled upon memory as the active, ambivalent process of continuously opening up the narrative of history to new possibilities.

***Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War.* By Sarah Cole.**

***Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere.* By Melba Cuddy-Keane. (Janine Utell)**

While the first book presents key notions of modernism—its sense of fragmentation, of alienation—from a new perspective, the second forces a reconsideration of the divide between high culture and mass culture that has been held so long as a given of modernism.

***The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain.* By Jason Harding. (Taryn L. Okuma)**

Drawing on not only the manuscripts of the *Criterion*, but archival material pertaining to the *Adelphi*, the *Calendar*, *Scrutiny*, *New Verse*, and many of the key figures of his study (Eliot, Pound, Read, and Dobrée, for example), Harding constructs a nuanced framework for an understanding of the trans-ideological/national circles in which the English public figure of literary studies moved during the 1930s.

***The Temptation of Innocence in the Dramas of Arthur Miller.* By Terry Otten. (Kate Egerton)**

Early plays through *The Crucible* take up only the first quarter of the book, and the play most central to Otten's thesis, *After the Fall*, is one many other critics have chosen to avoid, making this new volume a valuable contribution to the study of American theatre.

***Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon: a Casebook.* Edited by Jan Furman. (David Z. Wehner)**

By having the essays speak to one another, Furman's volume reflects one of Morrison's aims in her fiction: in the interview included at the casebook's end, the author maintains that she eschews a totalizing, definitive, and authoritarian point of view in her work and instead strives for a diversity of voices.

***Theory Matters.* By Vincent B. Leitch. (Thomas Chase)**

Disorder itself is as contingent a concept as any other, and resides very much in the eye of the beholder. Leitch plays with it, largely to our profit.

***German Studies in the United States: A Historical Handbook.* Edited by Peter Uwe Hohendahl. (Jennifer S. Cushman)**

A long overdue addition to Germanics, this volume responds to the increasingly unstable position of German at universities throughout the country in terms of declining enrollments and available faculty positions over the last decades.

***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* 6th ed. By Joseph Gibaldi. (Kenneth Womack)**

In an acerbic riff on the ills of contemporary society entitled "Inner Peace," nineteen-year-old singing sensation Nellie McKay recently lamented the restrictive nature of "MLA format," as well as a litany of other mechanisms designed to produce universal conformity. And she's not alone in her grief.