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The Reckoning: Law and Order on a Medieval Stage

Christine Neufeld

Only by complicating the traditional theatre history that the film invokes can we realize the socially transformative potential of the dramatic arts it endorses for a culture by now more accustomed to hyper-reality than realism.

Medieval Texts and National Identities: Dante in Red, White, and Green—Then Black

Susan J. Noakes

Literary studies of the middle Ages have a significant contribution to make to the analysis of the history of nationalism. This work is just now beginning, some of it here in the Midwest at the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Minnesota. It focuses on nationalism's textual roots and analyzes discourses of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalism from an intertextual perspective, placing them in relationship with masterpieces of medieval literature.

"Invectives . . . against the Americans": Benjamin Franklin's Nationalism in the Stamp Act Crisis

Todd Thompson

Not enough attention has been paid to the power of cultural consciousness—esthetic performances in contemporary belles lettres—during the Stamp Act crisis. Indeed, the slew of letters that Franklin wrote to the British press before his testimony to the House of Commons offers a tonal and ideological counterpoint to Franklin's official duties as a colonial agent.

A Liberal Inheritance: Biology, Property, and the Limits of the Possessive Individual in Elizabeth Stoddard's *The Morgesons*

Chad M. Luck

By repeatedly linking her "Locke" characters to issues of inheritance, Stoddard invites us to reassess the philosopher's seminal model of property rights in light of his less familiar theories of inheritance. In effect, Stoddard's Locke-filled novel highlights a tension within Lockean liberalism itself, a tension between an individual right to appropriation and a more communal right to shared property within a family.

Unlearning the Lesson: Wedekind, Nietzsche, and Educational Reform at the Turn of the Century

Jennifer Ham

For Wedekind, the source of true knowledge was the body: from it stems the desire to know, without it there is no knowledge at all and no revitalization of culture, only resentments.

A Question of Loyalty: *The New Yorker* and Kay Boyle

Rai Peterson

Newly identified internal New Yorker documents concerning the Boyle affair reveal heretofore unanalyzed dissent in the ranks of its staff and make it clear that, while her employers understood their responsibility in her legal predicament, they did not act courageously in her defense.

Look Back in Realism: The Making and Unmaking of Dramatic Form in the Reception of the British New Wave

Ann Marie Adams

If the shifting reception of the New Wave can teach us anything, it is the dangers of glibly equating a new voice on the stage with a new and more liberated dramatic form. This glib equation will fall through when some more innovative representation takes that new voice's place.

War Trauma and Religious Cityscape in David Jones'In Parenthesis

Charles Andrews

Part of the value of the metropolis comes from its similarity to war in squalor, isolation, and technocracy. Jones's poetry renders military routines liturgical and battlefields metropolitan.

Shostakovich in Love: William T. Vollmann's *Europe Central*

Peter G. Christensen

Vollmann thinks that Shostakovich deserved a grand passion, whether he had one or not. The composer's thirty-year romantic obsession with Elena in *Europe Central*, outlandish as it is on a historical level, serves the philosophical purpose of problematizing the interpretation of emotion in Shostakovich's music while linking stories of the Great Terror, the Spanish Civil War, and World War II in a complex fashion.

To Touch Solid Evidence: The Implicitly of Past and Present in Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred*

David LaCroix

Many of white supremacy's most powerful effects on the agency of white and black Americans operate as unspoken assumptions and expectations, particularly those that explain the relationship of the experience of time to imbalances of power, opportunity, and value.

Approaching Cinema: A Phenomenological and Cultural Perspective on Mariono Barroso's *Extasis*

Vania Barraza Toledo

The suspension of disbelief is the process through which a poetic sign captures and fascinates an individual.

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

Turning Linguistic Weakness into Critical Strength: Reading Literature as a Foreign Language

Annedith Schneider

One of the things that make "major works" different from everyday speech is a rich and nuanced language. Yet perceiving and understanding that difference is also one of the last things a non-native speaker will be able to recognize.

Book Reviews

***Approaches to Teaching Early Modern Spanish Drama.* Edited by Laura R. Bass and Margaret R. Greer. (RoseAnna Mueller)**

Modern-day dependence on television and film as mass-media texts contributes to one of the challenges of teaching comedia since today's students have little contact with live theater. They need to learn about theater history, about the role of the comedia among other early modern theaters, and about the performative contexts that bring this literature to life.

***Chesnutt and Realism: A Study of the Novels.* By Ryan Simmons. (Wiley Cash)**

Unlike William Dean Howells and other familiar authors who would leave racial representations seemingly "untroubled" in the nineteenth century, Chesnutt constantly sought to reconsider, question, and redefine the concepts and categorizations of race in America.

***Willa Cather and Material Culture: Real-World Writing, Writing the Real World.* Edited by Janis P. Stout. (Melissa J. Homestead)**

Mary Ann O'Farrell's final essay reflects on the collection's project and toys with one of the central questions of the volume's introduction, a question that other essays avoid: what does it mean to analyze "material culture" as represented in the immaterial verbal medium of words?

***Hart Crane: After His Lights.* By Brian M. Reed. (David T. Humphries)**

Tracing Crane's often overt affinity for the British fin de siècle and his intermittent friendship with the American writer Djuna Barnes, Reed examines how both writers shared an aesthetic of formal excess, as opposed to the balanced economy of high modernism and the apparent formlessness of avant-garde movements like Dada.

***Ecosublime: Environmental Awe and Terror from New World to Odd world.* By Lee Rozelle. (T. S. McMillin)**

Confronting deepening ecological crises worldwide, a number of scholars in the Humanities, drawing on their interests in the places, phenomena, and forces that we commonly call "nature," are inquiring into the extent to which cultural artifacts in general and literature specifically can help us understand nature, including human relations with it and our responsibilities to it. (Witness the enormous success and vitality of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment.)

***Sites of Autopsy in Contemporary Culture.* By Elizabeth Klaver. (Laura L. Behling)**

That autopsy provokes a way of looking at one's own self—given its etymology in “auto” and “optic”—does not suggest new theoretical ground, but Klaver's careful discussion of the Kennedy autopsy does fully explore the multiple perspectives, including social, that such a performance elicited.