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Wedded to Light: The Life, Letters, and Legend of St. Catherine of Siena

Julia Barrett and A. A. Lukowski

St. Catherine's own epistolary use of light metaphors, drawn largely from the Gospel of John but found throughout the New Testament, emphasizes manifestation, activity, proclamation, and social participation. In contrast, Raymond's Life casts her political activity in terms of matrimonial metaphors, drawn mostly from the Song of Songs, and thus emphasizes mystery, passivity, prayer, and hidden intimacy with Christ.

Atrophy and Development in Charles Darwin's Physiological Aesthetics

Jhoanna Infante

In Darwin's writing, the cultivation of taste and feeling suggests mobility, or the ability to rise from animal to man, yet comparisons echo out of his control, revealing uncomfortable facts of "kinship." Darwin's attempt to persuade his reader that the highest human faculties (taste and morality) originate from the simple feelings of animals and "savages" and to garner for the complex man the "noble" qualities of orangutans, ants, dogs, and other social creatures also acknowledges the scandal of comparing humans to animals.

Realism by Other Means?: Viewing Nabokov's Postmodernism in Mary McCarthy's Literary Criticism

Robert Henn

McCarthy could appreciate a novel, like *Pale Fire*, that seemed to confirm her own anti-bureaucratic convictions, and that furthermore seemed to suggest a utopian alternative to bureaucratic thought. Though we have come to know the postmodern as emphasizing the fragmentary and partial, McCarthy's realist-identified appreciation of Nabokov's postmodern novel offers a counterintuitive truth about postmodernism's roots in a classically realist attempt to represent, of all things, the totality of a society.

Remembering Lynching and Representing Contemporary Violence in Black Arts Poetry

David Kieran

Poets like Michael S. Harper, Larry Neal, Dudley Randall, Sonia Sanchez, and Etheridge Knight draw upon images of the bodily trauma caused by extralegal capital punishment to historicize the violence and oppression that dominate contemporary African American life. In doing so, they critique notions of progress by asserting that lynching's terror and the discourse of white supremacy that it legitimated continue under the guise of institutionalized and structural violence.

Looking into a Speaking Mirror: Politics, Interpretation, and the English Translation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Allison E. Fagan

Authors, translators, publishers, reviewers, and literary critics have shaped both the popular reception of Garcia Márquez's novel and a general understanding of "foreign" cultures by engaging the novel in terms that accommodate a United States readership. In their work on the 1970 translation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gregory Rabassa and the Center for Inter-American Relations, this funded the project, successfully created a distinctly new textual version that serves this national imaginary.

From East Berlin to Hollywood: Literary Resistance in Jurek Becker's *Jakob der Lügner*

Jennifer Bjornstad

By allowing multiple versions of events to co-exist within his story (including two different endings), Becker's narrator creates an ambiguity that encompasses both fact and fiction and resists the notion of a singular Holocaust narrative. Unfortunately, the East German version of *Jakob der Lügner*, which is generally considered the superior cinematic adaptation, essentially deletes the narrative frame that carries the bulk of this resistive move.

"The Corruption of Slaves into Tyrants": Toussaint, Haiti, and the Writing of Postcolonial Trauma

Li-Chun Hsiao

What returns in Glissant's *Monsieur Toussaint*, what emerges throughout Toussaint's repeated invocations of things in the past, is not his stalling at the dead end of his career—his imprisonment—nor a final crystallization of a certain pivotal moment that defines his tragedy, but rather the convergence of the past, the present, and the future into an entangled temporality.

A Simulation of Truth: Reconciling Gender in the Media and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa

Erin Holliday-Karre

Regardless of strong evidence to the contrary, radio, television, and newspapers framed women by their selfless capacity to forgive. Thus, despite their active resistance to the process, women in post-apartheid South Africa were instated as victimized witnesses, misfortunate recipients of grave injustice yet ready to forgive their offenders.

Rooted and Rootless: Writing from Place in a Mobile Society

James Engelhardt

I understand my Iowa cousins who complain about twisty roads and tall trees erasing the horizon. I understand mountain folk who come to the plains and wish for a rise so they can see the vista. I understand that one is missing the experience of what it means to be in a forest and that the other is missing the experience of the earth curving under a deep blue. I will never be able to burrow into a place like the dirt elites, but my punctuated migrations bring my experience and understanding of one place to another.

Mushrooms and Other Voices: The Visiting Writer in the Composition Classroom

Charles Sweetman

The Visiting Writer addresses each new Writing 1 class by explaining that the week is about exploring what academic writing conceived of fully and dynamically, has in common with creative writing genres like poetry and fiction. What they can have in common is the process of using writing as a tool for thinking and involving others in those thoughts.

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

Front Porch Lessons: *The Kite Runner*, *Kabul Transit*, and Required First-Year Writing

Lori Muntz

Given the strong presence of Afghanistan in American popular consciousness as the source of the attacks of September 11, 2001, that nation provides a productive focus for a composition course that considers information cycles, explores how the public uses information to prompt national policy and/or citizen action, and asks students to define their own points of engagement with both.

Book Reviews

***The American Counterfeit: Authenticity and Identity in American Literature and Culture.* By Mary McAleer Balkun. (Joe Webb)**

The emergence of a consumer-driven postbellum society that longed to collect and display possessions created a deep cultural anxiety about the ability to differentiate between the unreal and the real. Yet as many Americans became increasingly interested in detecting the inauthentic, the inauthentic became increasingly difficult to detect.

***Front Page Girls: Women Journalists in American Culture and Fiction, 1880-1930.* By Jean Marie Lutes. (David T. Humphries)**

Accordingly, journalism can now be seen as more than just a training ground for budding writers. Rather, the evolving, sometimes contradictory practices and values of journalism also provide a powerful lens for examining how literature is produced, distributed, and received.

***Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction.* By Brian Richardson. (Laura Behling)**

Richardson's thesis has implications for the traditional humanistic frame employed by conventional narration—namely, that these extreme narrators thoroughly negate the concept that a narrator is a person.

***A Poetics of Impasse in Modern and Contemporary American Poetry.* By Susan M. Schultz. (Joe Moffett)**

Schultz collapses the distance between reader and writer and text in experimental poetry. This is a scenario in which writer's block and reader's block generate a "new awareness" for both parties.

***Teaching Representations of the Spanish Civil War.* Edited by Noël Valis. (Iker González-Allende)**

An extended timeline from the end of the nineteenth century highlights the ways in which the Spanish Civil War is a conflict that still haunts contemporary Spanish society, both within and outside of Spain's borders, as evidenced by recent movies such as *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), directed by Guillermo del Toro. Certainly, it is important for students to be aware of the lasting presence of this war in Spain, yet instructors must also take care not to suggest inadvertently that Spain is a country where fratricide still occurs.

***Trinity of Passion: The Literary Left and the Antifascist Crusade.* By Alan Wald. (Dan Colson)**

Wald rethinks the biographies of relatively well-known figures—Arthur Miller, Ann Petry, Henry Roth—and offers valuable research on minor figures—Alvah Bessie, Chester Himes, John Sanford, Jo Sinclair, and numerous others—who are nonetheless important for mapping the full history of American literary radicalism. Taken collectively, these intensely researched, highly problematized portraits present a striking reconsideration of the literary Left's trajectory during an era often seen as lacking a radical literature.

***Ashbery's Forms of Attention.* By Andrew DuBois. (Daniel Kane)**

The real value of this book is the manner in which DuBois meditates on an ambitious number of Ashbery's better known and less familiar texts, losing a sparkling intelligence onto the page in order to propose exciting and interesting ways of reading the poet.

***Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation.* By Ato Quayson. (Marja Mogk)**

This is not a book about the representation of a marginalized minority group, but about the unexpected ways in which disability is present in our understandings of ourselves and constitutive of the many narratives that we read, hear, or encounter in daily life, even if we are temporarily able-bodied.