
Abstracts

Robert P. Fletcher, Visual Thinking and the Picture Story in *The History of Henry Esmond* 379

This essay argues that Thackeray's unillustrated three-volume novel *The History of Henry Esmond* is shaped by modes of perception and representation nascent in the visual culture of nineteenth-century England and epitomized in the comic strip. Through one of Thackeray's own picture stories, it first describes the ekphrastic basis of his narrative imagination and then contextualizes his visual thinking by relating his journalistic reflections on images in society to recent cultural histories of visual experience. Subsequently, the essay demonstrates that *Henry Esmond*, a seemingly monumental historical novel, is structured by the fractured syntax of the comic picture story and that the picture story's revisionist impulse decenters the autobiographical subject, Henry Esmond, and highlights the heuristic function of his narrative. The argument concludes by revisiting Thackeray's meditations on the picture story, the railroad, and modernity, suggesting that his texts—both picture stories and this *bildungsroman*—foreground a transformative vision and thus reveal the contingency of subjectivity. (RPF)

James M. Mellard, Lacan and the New Lacanians: Josephine Hart's *Damage*, Lacanian Tragedy, and the Ethics of *Jouissance* 395

Read through Lacan and such new Lacanians as Slavoj Žižek and Juliet Flower MacCannell, Josephine Hart's *Damage* (1991) illustrates how an ethics of *jouissance* finds a tragic action emblematic of postmodern narcissism. New Lacanians stress drive, *jouissance*, the real, the primordial father, and the femme fatale. Typically, they find these elements in film noir. Transforming noir into love story, *Damage* foregrounds an unnamed narrator whose sadomasochistic affair with his son's fiancée precipitates the son's death. Beginning with the narrator in the guise of the traditional oedipal father, the affair unveils the fiancée as a femme fatale who constitutes the narrator as what MacCannell would call the destructive, narcissistic brother become primordial father. Enacting an ethics of *jouissance* because the narrator will not abandon his drive to enjoyment beyond the pleasure principle, primordial father and femme fatale participate in a narrative that must be called Lacanian tragedy. (JMM)

Michele Pridmore-Brown, 1939–40: Of Virginia Woolf, Gramophones, and Fascism 408

Virginia Woolf in her last novel, *Between the Acts*, explores fascism from the vantage of the new physics and of information technology. Her knowledge of the new physics is attested to by myriad diary entries; her knowledge of information technology was largely intuitive. In *Between the Acts*, she uses a gramophone to brew patriotic emotion and thus to transform a group of British pageant goers into a herd. Ultimately, however, she short-circuits the herd impulse by privileging the audience members' interpretative acts. In the novel, patriotic messages of authority are deliberately adulterated by the gramophone's static or noise. The audience members must therefore make meaning out of noise; these interpretative acts break their visceral connection to the sound waves, the rhythm and rhyme, of patriotism. Woolf's intuitive grasp of the concept of noise inherent in information technology allows her to articulate an antiauthoritarian pluralist politics. (MP-B)

Robert Richmond Ellis, Reading through the Veil of Juan Francisco Manzano: From Homoerotic Violence to the Dream of a Homoracial Bond 422

The *Autobiografía* of the Cuban slave poet Juan Francisco Manzano is the only Spanish American slave narrative written by a person living in slavery. In this text Manzano recounts his corporal punishments in graphic detail but explicitly veils certain key episodes

of abuse. I contend that this veil is a marker of sexual assault and that the *Autobiografía* bears silent testimony to the rape of male slaves. Manzano, however, was not only a victim of homoerotic violence; in one of his poems, “Un sueño” (“A Dream”), he reconfigures homoerotic desire in a way that tentatively reconstitutes his self-integrity and establishes a bond of reciprocity with his enslaved brother. In Manzano’s writing, then, homoeroticism is transformed from an instrument of oppression into an act of resistance that challenges the racist and masculinist violence of the colonial slave system. (RRE)

Thomas Seifrid, Gazing on Life’s Page: Perspectival Vision in Tolstoy 436

Abounding in visual metaphors and situations, Tolstoy’s works are permeated with the conviction that it is the nature of truth to be seen. This attitude exemplifies the ocularcentrism that has characterized European thought since the Greeks, though the Tolstoyan corpus also displays some of the tension between ocularcentrism’s eastern and western European recensions that obtains in the Russian context. The quintessential visual situation in Tolstoy is emphatically perspectival—despite the attractions of more “Russian” ways of seeing. The scenes constituting that situation work, in a way reminiscent of the camera obscura, to present life in an intellectually and morally apprehensible form by turning it into a planar visual surface. Ultimately Tolstoy’s impulse can be linked with the material nature of books, which foster this very kind of experience when the eye is trained on the page, and this linkage has implications for Russian culture as well as for the relation between the verbal and the visual in general. (TS)