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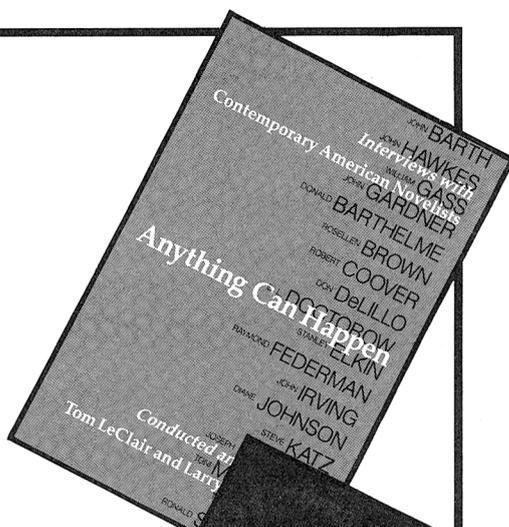
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May 1983

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On the Threshold of the Realist Novel: Gender and Genre in *La gaviota*. SUSAN KIRKPATRICK

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Abstract. Cecilia Böhl, who wrote under the pseudonym Fernán Caballero, manipulated the fictional forms available to her in an attempt to compensate for or conceal her transgression of the taboo against women writers. In the protagonist of *La gaviota* she combined types drawn from three genres—the tale of morals, the Romantic novel of the ambitious provincial youth, and Spanish *costumbrismo*—in an elaborate strategy designed to disavow her identification with her character. In so doing, she constructed a composite fictional discourse that opened the way for the realist novel in Spain. Her anxiety about male-female boundaries, however, extended to generic definitions as well: her static treatment of the fictional modes she brought together prevented her from achieving the fluid, dynamic narrative form that is characteristic of realism. (SK)

The Conflict of Interpretations and the Limits of Pluralism.

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Abstract. The debate about validity in interpretation has pitted monism against pluralism. Some theorists insist that any literary work has a single, determinate meaning, and others argue that there are no limits to the readings a text allows. Neither view adequately describes the field of conflicting interpretations. Critics can and do have legitimate disagreements about literary works; yet we can also say that some readings are wrong, not simply different. The hermeneutic field is divided among conflicting systems of interpretation, each based on different presuppositions that decide what its procedures will disclose and what they will disguise. But several tests for validity—inclusiveness, efficacy, and intersubjectivity—act as constraints on reading and regulate claims to legitimacy. While these tests have limitations that prevent them from resolving all hermeneutic disagreements, literary criticism is nevertheless a rational, disciplined enterprise—though an inherently pluralistic one. (PBA)

Scripture and Poetic Discourse in *The Subjection of Women*.

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Abstract. Although critics have largely overlooked the literary properties of *The Subjection of Women*, the essay's effectiveness as theory is inseparable from its poetic dimension. To persuade an unsympathetic audience of a radically subversive thesis, Mill weaves into his argument a poetic subtext modeled on the preeminent mythos of the Western world, the biblical account of history from the fall to paradise. At the same time, aware that Scripture has historically been used to authorize patriarchal values, he exploits the self-critical impulse inherent in biblical hermeneutic traditions, formulating a thematics of language, writing,

and interpretation that allows him to turn patriarchal discourse against itself. He dismantles the very myth he employs in order to remake it as a vehicle for his liberating vision. (SHA)

Hidden Depths: Dialogue and Characterization in Chaucer and Malory. PETER R. SCHROEDER 374

Abstract. Although we know that medieval writers were not novelists, we can still succumb to the illusion that the characters in their works occasionally exhibit a degree of psychological complexity and “depth” out of keeping with our historical expectations. Chaucer’s Criseyde and Malory’s Guinevere are such characters; in both, the illusion results largely from a technique of using dialogue to suggest responses, thoughts, or feelings that are otherwise hidden. To achieve such suggestiveness, Chaucer and Malory employ a device that theorists of speech acts call “implicature.” As we overhear the words of Criseyde and Guinevere, we must constantly fill in gaps, supply missing relations, and guess at some “real” meaning that the surface meaning seems to conceal. Through this process we participate in the construction of two characters whose elusiveness, opacity, and apparent inconsistency are surprisingly verisimilar. (PRS)

“Go”: Milton’s Antinomianism and the Separation Scene in *Paradise Lost*, Book 9. JOAN S. BENNETT 388

Abstract. The quarrel between Adam and Eve in book 9 concerns not only relations between the sexes but also the nature of human government. Prelapsarian Adam and Eve, who, like the antinomian Christian, possess total spiritual liberty, deal with an epistemological dilemma that confronted antinomians like Milton during the English revolution: In the absence of intrinsically authoritative external laws, how can one know when one’s decision to act is based on the direction of God’s spirit dwelling in one’s heart and when it is based on personal desire? In the light of Milton’s historical answer to this question, we can see that Milton dramatizes in Eve the voluntarist antinomian’s tendency to overconfidence and in Adam the humanist antinomian’s struggle with right reason. While neither person sins in this scene, both lose their balance in particularly antinomian ways that grant us insight into the necessarily precarious nature of human freedom. (JSB)

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