
Abstracts

Mark Jeffreys, Ideologies of Lyric: A Problem of Genre in Contemporary Anglophone Poetics 196

Since the mid-1980s, lyric has been stigmatized by its association with the New Criticism. This circumstance raises the question whether an ideology can be assigned to a text on the basis of the text's identification with a particular genre or school of critical thought. Observing several recent critical constructions of the ideology of lyric, both hostile and sympathetic, I argue that the act of identifying lyric as either an oppositional genre or a reactionary one encourages oversimplification of the term's history and criticism and desensitizes readers to the ideological diversity of texts identified as lyrical. (MJ)

Sharon Marcus, The Profession of the Author: Abstraction, Advertising, and Jane Eyre 206

Through the concept of abstraction I examine the relation between female subjectivity and writing in *Jane Eyre*. In the novel *abstraction* means a lack of attention or a lapse of will, conditions that permit Jane to realize her wishes. Three other meanings of the term shed light on *Jane Eyre* and on Charlotte Brontë's career. Through abstraction as a degree of relative disembodiment, both Jane and Brontë avoid becoming female spectacles. Jane by shifting from corporeal rebelliousness to an anonymous advertisement, Brontë by adopting an ungendered pseudonym. Abstraction also involves the alienation of the self into objects and texts, as when Jane and Brontë project themselves into their written products. Finally, abstraction entails the synthesis of the particular into the general: Jane rhetorically enters a professional body of governesses, and Brontë participates in the commercial literary marketplace. (SM)

David Chinitz, T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide 236

T. S. Eliot is remembered as a champion of elite tradition who struggled to rescue an autonomous and uncompromised high art from the encroaching tide of mass culture. However, the essays, poems, and plays of his early career reveal an Eliot who believed that the ever-deepening division between the "high" and the "low" in culture represented a form of social disintegration that threatened to make art irrelevant. Rejecting the sacralization of high art as a stultifying bourgeois misappropriation, Eliot allied himself with the lower class and its participatory engagement with popular culture—an engagement that Eliot himself shared. Despite a complex personal ambivalence manifested in his poetry, Eliot sought to reconcile the dissociated levels of culture by theorizing and attempting to create a new public art form: a poetic drama based on such popular forms as music-hall comedy and jazz. (DC)

David Wayne Thomas, Gödel's Theorem and Postmodern Theory 248

In 1931 the mathematician Kurt Gödel published a treatise establishing the inherent incompleteness and inconsistency of that order of logical system used in Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell's *Principia Mathematica*. Gödel's work has proved an attractive reference in diverse fields, particularly in postmodern literary-critical theory, which often seems intent on logical impasse and which sees a protodeconstructive corroboration in Gödel's theorem. Such analogizing is not without informative substance, but a closer look at the philosophical and mathematical theory surrounding Gödel's practice reveals that Gödelian undecidability emerges from a theoretical framework—a mathematical Platonism—with extensive metaphysical commitments regarding subject position and the objects of thought. Gödel's explorations of logical undecidability do not so much undermine logocentric suppositions as exploit them all the more consequentially. The analogy between Gödel's theorem and postmodern theory underscores the metaphysical operations of any criticism that finds in Gödel a "postmetaphysical" ally. (DWT)
