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the Age of Bluff

Paradox and Ambiguity in Rabelais and Montaigne

Barbara C. Bowen. Professor Bowen here presents a view of French Renaissance literature which is seldom found in print in English: that Renaissance literature is usually fundamentally paradoxical and/or ambiguous, and that a lack of recognition of this fact has led to serious misunderstanding of the writers of the period. Whereas great writers of the 17th century were aiming to satisfy the reader, those of the 16th century were aiming to "bluff" or stimulate and often to amuse him. Professor Bowen provides a detailed examination of the stylistic and thematic techniques of paradox and ambiguity used by Rabelais and Montaigne, as well as an overview of the work of several of their contemporaries. "This is a solid and impressive contribution to French Renaissance studies. A highly stimulating and important work." — Floyd F. Gray, University of Michigan. 272 pages. $9.00.

The Hoodwinking of Madeline and Other Essays on Keats's Poems

Jack Stillinger. These essays, focusing on the fundamental Keatsian conflict between imagination and reality, include a discussion of the subject and arrangement of Keats's poems published in 1817, the relationship of themes in *Endymion,* the realistic tendencies of *Isabella,* the place of human concerns in the Hyperion poems and *Lamia,* skepticism in *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *The Eve of Saint Mark,* the structure and meaning of the odes, and Keats's relation to Wordsworth in the concept of "Romanticism." "[Stillinger] brings to bear a variety of approaches — stylistic, thematic, biographical and psychological, textual — in all of which he speaks with authoritative knowledge, clarity, balance, and insight." — W. J. Bate, Harvard University. 192 pages. $6.95.

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Frederick Garber. Wordsworth's poems are almost all about a meeting with palpable strangeness, and his poetry is poetry of "object-consciousness," holds the author. For the poet, encounter began with one way of seeing which led to others, varied in scope, meaning, and quality, but offering an increase in knowledge which gave more meaning to his surroundings and to himself. From the activity of encounter came the energy which, controlled and channeled, could lead the experience into the shape of a poem. 230 pages. $7.95.

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Abstract. The concept of Romania, considered by Curtius to be the only context permitting a true comparative literature, is basically a product of the Romantic movement's national and historical consciousness, its search for indigenous roots. It is an inadequate context for the study of modern literatures, and also the wrong kind of context because it emphasizes study of origins and derivations. Any context that defines literature by a place, by geographical or linguistic units, probably fosters bad pedagogy, criticism, and literary history. It makes us teach literature as an institution and as information, and leads us to neglect the human function of literature. While we should renovate literary history (for literary utopianism only reinforces the autotelic status of much literary study), we should direct our attention to the structures of literature as a whole, of consciousness and the imagination, and place man's fiction-making within the range of his other image-making activities. The teaching of literature—a peculiar activity whose very possibility is open to question—should be centrally concerned with the question, what is literature? Studies should be organized to direct attention to the elementary functions of the fiction-maker. (PB)

Sobre "aquella bestialidad" de Garcilaso (égl. III.230). ENRIQUE MARTÍNEZ-LÓPEZ 12

Abstract. When Garcilaso refers to the death of Isabel Freyre, representing her as the nymph Elisa, who "estaba entre las hierbas degollada" (eclogue III.230), the poet's commentators, morally repelled by this brutal image, suggest changing the term *degollada* "beheaded, with her throat cut," or to understand it as *desangrada*, "dead by bleeding," since this meaning seems more appropriate to the death at childbirth of the poet's beloved Isabel. Although this view is still current today, a stylistic analysis of the passage shows that Garcilaso—more interested in emotional intensity than in historical accuracy—wrote *degollada* with the then primary meaning of "decapitated." This interpretation is corroborated by a close look at the poet's sources—the death of Eurydice and decapitations of Orpheus (Virgil, Ovid, Poliziano) and Issabella (Ariosto)—as well as by Camões' imitation of Garcilaso's beheaded nymph in his decapitation of Inés de Castro. The bloody truculence of this image is otherwise understandable in a tormented and violent Garcilaso who, in spite of being traditionally considered as a "dulce y blando" poet, very often chose to associate beauty and love with cruelty. (In Spanish) (EML)

Prodigality and Time in *The Merchant of Venice*. SYLVAN BARNET 26

Abstract. A study of two motifs—prodigality and time—may help to reveal some of the meanings of *The Merchant of Venice*. Scornful of generosity, Shylock sees Bassanio and Antonio as prodigals, and thus he resembles somewhat the self-satisfied elder brother of the parable of the Prodigal Son. Bassanio's prodigality is in harmony with time; he does not calculate, as Shylock does, but acts intuitively, and because his wants are "ripe" he reaps a reward. Two examples: though he plans to attend a masque, to the audience's surprise he suddenly seizes the moment and departs for Belmont when the wind changes; at Belmont, in contrast to Morocco and Aragon, who offer reasons for their choices, Bassanio offers no reason for choosing as he does, except that the lead casket "moves" him. Such uncalculated responses to the present moment are fruitful, in contrast to the usurer's calculations about the future, and especially in contrast to the usurer's practice of risking nothing while (in Elizabethan terminology) "selling time." (SB)

Structural Unity and Temporal Concordance: The War in Heaven in *Paradise Lost*. JASON P. ROSENBLATT 31

Abstract. Overt references to the climax of the Exodus appear in the first and last books of *Paradise Lost*. The war in heaven, appearing in the exact center of the poem and overlaid with elements of the Exodus account, radiates meaning to the beginning and end. When Milton uses the Exodus story to heighten our apprehension of his poem as a wholly unified structure, he is accommodating to the esthetic demands of his poem a tradition deriving from the Old Testament which found temporal concordance in the event. The Prophets bind together the primordial battle with the Dragon, the Exodus, and the Messianic Age,

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thus providing an eschatological interpretation of the overwhelming of Pharaoh's forces and the redemption of the Children of Israel. The New Testament—believing that the New Exodus is already at hand—enjoins the Christian reader to see Israel's escape through the waters of the Red Sea as a foreshadowing of baptism in Christ's saving blood. Throughout his life, Milton maintains an essentially Old Testament conception of the Exodus. Indeed, the appearance in Book VI of details from Exodus as well as from Rashi's *Commentary* suggests that even when Milton invokes the typological dimension, he takes pains to preserve the literal meaning of the Old Testament episode. (JPR)

Two Modes of Apprehending Nature: A Gloss on the Coleridgean Symbol. DOUGLAS BROWNLOW WILSON 42

Abstract. Coleridge maintains a lifelong ambivalence toward nature. As early as the 1795 version of "The Eolian Harp," he toys with incompatible speculations upon nature and, for the moment, retreats from the pantheistic implications of a bold metaphor. After long worrying about the problem of nature, he arrives at a more stable resolution of his dilemma: in *The Stateman's Manual* (1816) and in his "Essays on Method" (1817), he employs a traditional distinction between *natura naturata* and *natura naturans.* Regarded in this latter aspect, nature becomes a source of sacramental symbols: Coleridge holds that the imagination is peculiarly fitted to create symbols and, hence, to apprehend *natura naturans.* In 1817, twenty-one years after its original publication, he adds to "The Eolian Harp" a key phrase, "the one Life within us and abroad." This addition, Coleridge's poetic equivalent of *natura naturans*, reconciles the poem to his Christian Platonism. Despite a growing dualistic aversion to nature in later life, Coleridge, as witnessed by dated footnotes added to his works in the 1820's, continues sporadically to reassert his sacramental faith in nature. Coleridge's adaptation of *natura naturans*, though it does not resolve all ambiguities, binds through common assumption a considerable body of his mature writings. (DBW)

A Reinterpretation of *The Mill on the Floss*. JOHN HAGAN . . 53

Abstract. Recent interpretations of *The Mill on the Floss* distort the novel's emphasis in two principal ways. According to one, it is a tragedy of repression and regression; Maggie is responsible for her downfall because she is flawed by her acceptance of Kempis' philosophy of renunciation and by a fixation upon her father and brother, both of which fatally pull against her legitimate desire for wider fulfillment. According to the other interpretation, however, this desire is itself Maggie's flaw, whereas her acceptance of Kempis and her family devotion are good; thus, the main subject of the novel is not her downfall, but her spiritual development, which is climaxed by her two rejections of Stephen and her attempt to rescue Tom from the flood. Although both contain valid insights, neither of these readings is satisfactory, for each oversimplifies George Eliot's complex outlook, which presents Maggie's frustrations and her ultimate defeat as springing from both the fact that she has intense and legitimate desires for a full and rich life which Tom and Tulliver cannot comprehend, and the fact that she is, at the same time, bound to them by an equally legitimate, indeed noble, love which makes her renunciation of those desires morally necessary. (JH)

Rhythm as Form in Lawrence: "The Horse Dealer's Daughter." THOMAS H. MCCABE 64

Abstract. D. H. Lawrence's art is not so loose as many critics have thought. Indeed, his most characteristic stories reveal a coherent form that rests on various rhythmic devices: repeated scenes, phrases, and characters. These may be called conventional rhythmic devices, but the form of these stories rests chiefly on Lawrence's unique rhythmic devices: the dynamic relations of attraction-repulsion between his characters and his expanding rhythmic imagery that enables him to reveal direct psychic experience. E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* and E. K. Brown's *Rhythm in the Novel* provide the theoretical background for the term, "rhythm," but Lawrence's use of rhythm in fiction is only partly explained in these critics' terms. "The Horse Dealer's Daughter" is a perfect example of rhythmic form in Lawrence's work: the dynamic, to-and-fro rhythm between death and life, between the daily self controlled by the will and the essential self guided by desire, between the two lovers each separate and other who touch and draw apart, touch and draw apart. And all these rhythms are gradually transformed from the realistic to the psychic or unconscious world through repeated and expanding images of eyes, hands, waters. (THMcC)

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Disenchantment: Tom Sawyer in *Huckleberry Finn*. JUDITH FETTERLEY 69

Abstract. Mark Twain's disenchantment with the boy hero of his first novel is revealed in a series of significant changes which distinguish the Tom Sawyer of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from the Tom Sawyer of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. In *Tom Sawyer*, Tom's cruelty is essentially a by-product of his failure to consider the consequences of his actions; when he does consider, he feels remorse. In *Huckleberry Finn*, cruelty is a primary motive in all Tom's plans. Tom's interest in rules in *Tom Sawyer* is a minor aspect of his character and in fact supports his larger role of exposing the rigidities and hypocrisies of the rule-ridden society of St. Petersburg; in *Huckleberry Finn*, Tom's interest in rules is an obsession which makes him the butt rather than the agent of exposure and intensifies his cruelty. Tom is the natural leader of the world of *Tom Sawyer* because each of his schemes provides pleasure for those concerned. In *Huckleberry Finn*, Tom has nothing of value to offer; he maintains his control instead through a series of tyrannies. The ending of *Huckleberry Finn* is a major exposure of Tom's cruelty and of the connection between cruelty and pleasure in his mind. (JF)

Initiation and Tragedy: A New Look at Edwin Muir's "The Gate." ELIZABETH HUBERMAN 75

Abstract. Edwin Muir's poem, "The Gate," not only marks literally the dividing point in his work between almost unrelieved darkness and increasing light, but, in every detail of its complex structure and in controlling metaphor, it signals the loss of innocence, the intimate acquaintance with evil, which Muir's later poems suggest must be endured before there can be any true knowledge of good. Both halves, into which the poem is cut by a strong caesura in the twelfth line, plunge in parallel downward movements from security into loss and fear; and although a secondary movement, based on a metaphor of initiation, carries the poem forward, over the threshold of "The Gate," this forward step also turns out to be downward. Because of Muir's persistent association of a castle with treachery from within, as his novel, *The Three Brothers*, and several poems show, the step into the fortress of adulthood is simultaneously a drop into the central darkness and terror of the universe. (EH)

Journey to the End of Art: The Evolution of the Novels of Louis-Ferdinand Céline. COLIN W. NETTELBECK 80

Abstract. Contrary to its negative reputation, Céline's literary opus, with the exception of *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, evolves toward a spirit of regeneration. Although in *Voyage* Céline shows the image of death as a paralyzing force to derive from man's egoism, his own artistic vision remains too self-centered to allow him to follow his intuition of the beauty of life. *Mort à crédit*, *Casse-pipe*, and *Guignol's Band*, as novels of initiation, are an attempt to eradicate this egoism, and the presence of death is now counterbalanced both by a structure that permits of catharsis and by the creation of archetypal figures representing the superior value of life. The pamphlets, despite their treatment of the Jews, emphasize and elucidate this shift towards affirmation. The novels of maturity, *Féerie pour une autre fois*, *D'un château l'autre*, and *Nord*, through their structure and symbolism, make explicit that Céline's basic artistic intention has become not only to transcend the disintegration of Western civilization but to provide the mechanism for a similar transcendence in his reader. In *Rigodon*, he reaches a level of contemplation from which even the collapse of a civilization can be seen as promising new life. (CWN)

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