

PMLA

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The Collected Letters of William Morris

Volume I

Edited by Norman Kelvin



The life of William Morris (1834-1896) is revealed in significant new detail by his complete surviving correspondence, brought together here for the first time. Including many previously unpublished letters, this collection not only bears witness to Morris' day-to-day activities and friendships, but also reflects his keen response to landscape and architecture, his sense of social responsibility, and his interest in the techniques of the applied arts.

Volume I covers Morris' student days at Oxford and marriage to Jane Burden; the first twenty years of Morris and Co.; his success as a poet with the publication of *The Early Paradise*; his two trips to Iceland; and the start of his socialist career. The letters of the late 1870s show Morris' capacity for tireless devotion to a cause, and document his work for the Eastern Question Association and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.



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Gawain and the Image of the Wound.

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Abstract. The wounded neck of the hero in the Middle English *Gawain and the Green Knight* constitutes a subtle yet significant link in the chain of signs that shapes the poem's meaning. As illumined by the long tradition of commentary on the wound as moral emblem, the site of Gawain's nick draws on the Christian doctrine of the Fall, ancient philosophy's idea of the soul's anatomy, and the implications of the literary motif of beheading in order to suggest the nature of the hero's culpability. Gawain's fault, as signified by his wound, involves the disruption of reason's reign in the soul and is associated with the scriptural theme of stiff-necked pride. Paired and contrasted with Gawain's wound are the sacred wounds of Christ, signs of the remedy for the hero's fault and the basis of a parallel between the moral concerns of *Gawain* and its companion poem *Pearl*. (PFR)

Pantagruel's Genealogy and the Redemptive Design of Rabelais's *Pantagruel*. EDWIN M. DUVAL

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Abstract. *Pantagruel* is composed according to an overarching typological design that lends to the work both coherence and a profound meaning. Pantagruel's genealogy and other biblical elements in the first chapter establish Rabelais's hero as a type of Christ whose specific messianic mission is to reverse the effects of Cain's murder of Abel. The telos toward which the entire work moves is the climactic duel in which Pantagruel fulfills his promise by killing Loup Garou, a type of Cain, and bringing peace to the besieged Amaurotes. *Pantagruel* is thus a Christian humanist epic of redemption in which the original crime of brother against brother (Cain's fratricide) is obliterated, and the evangelical reign of brotherly love (Christ's *caritas*) is restored. (EMD)

Jonsonian Comedy and the Discovery of the Social Self.

LAWRENCE DANSON	179
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Abstract. The self in Jonson's comedies, like the self described by modern sociologists, is a reflection of other reflections, created by the society it creates. As Milgram's experiment on obedience to authority seems to show, the social self is radically contingent. Therefore the anagnorisis in Jonson's comedies is a catastrophe in more than the technical sense; it is the discovery of a self that cannot bear its own exposure. By contrast, the heroes and heroines of Shakespeare's romantic comedies discover themselves in relation to a nurturing family and a mature sexual family. Theirs is a psychological self. In the "comical satires," Jonson encounters the problem of finding appropriate endings for plays whose characters can achieve no satisfying self-discovery. In *Volpone* the protagonist acts like an experimental social psychologist, exposing the pliability of the social self. The catastrophe shows that Volpone's own "substance" is only a reflection of his world's insubstantiality. (LD)

From <i>Patria</i> to <i>Matria</i> : Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Risorgimento. SANDRA M. GILBERT	194
<p>Abstract. Though some Victorian readers believed that Elizabeth Barrett Browning's partisanship for "the cause of Italy" led to a failure of inspiration, I argue that for a complex of reasons Italy became the embodiment of this woman poet's aesthetic and utopian desires: through her commitment to Italy's revolutionary struggle for political identity, Barrett Browning reenacted her own struggle for identity, a risorgimento that was, like Italy's, both an insurrection and a resurrection. Moreover, by using metaphors of the healing of a wounded woman/land to articulate both the reality and the fantasy of her own revitalization, Barrett Browning located herself in a re-creative female poetic tradition that descends from Christine de Pizan to H. D. Infusing supposedly asexual poetics with the dreams of a distinctively sexual politics, these women imagined nothing less than the transformation of <i>patria</i> into <i>matria</i> and thus the risorgimento of the lost land that Christina Rossetti called the "mother country." (SMG)</p>	
Only Relations: Vision and Achievement in <i>To the Lighthouse</i> . THOMAS G. MATRO	212
<p>Abstract. Roger Fry's notions of the artist's unique vision and of the aesthetic design that captures that vision have long been acknowledged as primary influences on <i>To the Lighthouse</i>. Consequently, for most commentators, the novel's closing events signify the achievement of a transcendent "oneness" or a perceptual balance captured in art but rarely experienced in life. Examination of repeated patterns of style and narrative progression shows that the design of the artist Lily's vision—one of unresolved ambivalence and estrangement rather than unity—is no different from that of the other characters, and this vision is the one caught in Lily's painting and reflected in all aspects of the novel. Woolf exploits Fry's theories to probe the desire for unity or "oneness" in personal and aesthetic relations, but she finds refuge, finally, in the act, not the result, of invention, in perception itself "before anything is made of it." (TGM)</p>	
Reading Bon's Letter and Faulkner's <i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> DAVID KRAUSE	225
<p>Abstract. The old letter Mr. Compson gives his son Quentin to read in chapter 4 of <i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> cannot be easily interpreted. Faulkner refuses to authorize any assumptions about the origin, destination, or meaning of the letter that might simplify its reading; instead, he entangles its readers, both inside and outside the novel, in a web of competing readings, rereadings, and misreadings. Given the problems of reading, we cannot assume that a text like <i>Absalom</i> discloses the way it imagines its own reading(s) through the scenes of reading it represents. Still, the better we can see how Faulkner imagines various readings of texts within his text—through detailed readings of the readings of Bon's letter—the closer we can come to understanding what Faulkner reveals about the uncertainties and risks of reading, about what is and is not in his book, and about our own uncertainties regarding how we are and are not in the world. (DK)</p>	
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