
Abstracts

Frances E. Dolan, *Taking the Pencil out of God's Hand: Art, Nature, and the Face-Painting Debate in Early Modern England* 224

The categories of art and nature organize both elite defenses of poetry and popular discussions of women's use of cosmetics in early modern England. The two discourses, for all their diversity, can be seen to constitute a single debate that complexly associates the limits on creativity with the feminine. By tracing the shifting evaluations and interrelations of nature and art in the relevant texts and the changing ways in which the categories are gendered, I show how the identification of either as feminine often accompanies an insistence on constraint and impairment. When these discourses—whether they privilege art or nature—cast doubt on human creativity, they do so by allying it with female agency, which, while granted a role, is invariably constructed negatively. (FED)

Ellen G. Friedman, *Where Are the Missing Contents? (Post)Modernism, Gender, and the Canon* 240

Jean-François Lyotard has argued that the master narratives sustaining Western civilization in the past have been delegitimated and can no longer be presented. Although a sense of loss for these "missing contents" marks modernist and postmodernist literature, this sense seems more evident in texts written by men than in texts written by women. Women's texts that convey these missing contents do not look backward toward past master narratives. Rather, what is missing is the "not yet presented," that which has not yet come into range. This pattern of bifurcation in modernism and postmodernism suggests that male texts are more readily adopted into the canon than female texts are because their nostalgic stance toward the past binds them, as female texts generally are not bound, to the long reach of the male Western narrative tradition. (EGF)

Bette London, *Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, and the Spectacle of Masculinity* 253

While a strong feminist tradition has virtually revolutionized the reading of *Frankenstein*, giving the work's feminine subject new visibility and centrality, this approach has simultaneously obscured access to the text's theatrical display of masculinity. Yet an understanding of the deployment of the male body (in the novel and in the cultural construction of Mary Shelley) might challenge current understandings of both the gendering of *Frankenstein* and *Frankenstein's* place in the gendering of literary history. The spectacle of masculinity haunts late-nineteenth-century Shelleyan iconography and informs the gendered narratives that shape such influential studies as James Rieger's twentieth-century textual and biographical reconstructions of *Frankenstein* and its author. Given this history, a feminist critique can profit from a reading of *Frankenstein's* insistent exhibition of masculinity, for the male spectacle unfixes gender hierarchies, illuminating the fractures and contradictions underlying masculine authority. (BL)

Gregory W. Bredbeck, *B/O—Barthes's Text/O'Hara's Trick* 268

Barthes's principle of *jouissance* provides an erotics of reading that counters essentialist textuality. Yet much feminist inquiry has also found implicit phallogocentrism in the concept. I use the poetry and poetics of Frank O'Hara to reread Barthes's *Pleasure of the Text*. Gay male sexuality, I claim, offers a model that refuses to privilege the phallus. Moreover, O'Hara's poetics symbolically embraces the gay male

body and demonstrates an absolute *jouissance*. I juxtapose O'Hara's poetry with an ironic myth of gay male sexuality, the "signifying clone." The comparison shows that both this sexuality and O'Hara's poetry reconstruct "meaning" as an *ex post facto* decision—in contrast to traditional androcentric notions of meaning as an *a priori* truth. I suggest that the material experience of sexualities can provide a basis for a theorization that unwrites the homogenizing transcendence of the androcentric phallus. (GWB)

Robert Lecker, "A Quest for the Peaceable Kingdom": The Narrative in Northrop Frye's Conclusion to the *Literary History of Canada* 283

The conclusion Northrop Frye contributed to the *Literary History of Canada* (1965) depicts in narrative form his evolving sense of how critics necessarily become involved in their critical creations and, further, of how the degree of this involvement provides a measure of their own imaginative development. Frye reads the Canadian literary tradition as a romance that implicates him in its structures. Because the conclusion glosses the fall-and-redemption myth that inspires much of his work, it illustrates his conception of literary history making as simultaneously an act of self-making. Viewed from the perspective of Frye's own transforming voyage through it, the conclusion appears in a new light as a romance about the creation of the idea of Canada, a metaphoric conception that is transhistorical, autonomous, and distinctly literary. (RL)

Jeanne P. Brownlow, Epochal Allegory in Galdós's *Torquemada*: The Ur-Text and the Episteme 294

In the four-part novel *Torquemada* (1889–95), Galdós allegorizes the philosophical complexities of his age with a powerful negotiatory energy. Historical exigencies modify his miserly protagonist's figural force by submitting the venerable sin of avarice to a secular revision that appropriately reflects the nineteenth-century positivist episteme. Since Dante's *Divine Comedy* provides the structural framework and the typological authority for the protagonist's successful social ascent, a sense of cognitive disjunction is inevitable. Comte's synthetic Religion of Humanity crosses with the medieval value system implied by Dante's Christian allegory, leaving the capitalist moneylender in a state of mortal anxiety and moral confusion. The epistemological dimension of Galdós's macroallegory equals in scope and signifying intensity the most famous twentieth-century models for allegorizing modern history—the archaeological, the tropic, the dialectical, the deconstructive—and underscores the role of positivism as a precursor of these oracular practices. (JPB)

George Hoffmann, The Montaigne Monopoly: Revising the *Essais* under the French Privilege System 308

Does the business of writing shape the works of even the most private authors? A demonstration that one of the major figures of French literature was influenced throughout his career by Renaissance publishing policy might clarify the relation of professional demands to individual genius. The way Montaigne expanded and enlarged his book from edition to edition, one of the most salient features of his writing, has been variously attributed to biographical and philosophical causes—that is, to sources in his creative energy. The historical records, however, suggest that Montaigne's revision of his *Essais* was inspired also by the need to reestablish ownership over a work that was about to fall into the public domain. Legislation from the period reveals that publishers regularly released revised editions to renew their privileges (short-term bookselling monopolies). (GH)

Michael R. Near, Anticipating Alienation: *Beowulf* and the Intrusion of Literacy 320

Implicit in *Beowulf*'s thematic involvement with language is a marked and persistent hostility toward the epistemological foundation underpinning the practice of literacy. While the poem seems to acknowledge the psychological posture conditioned by, or at least compatible with, literate practices, the acknowledgment characterizes that posture as a clear, direct threat to the ordering structures—and thus to the basic survival—of the poem's central system of personal interdependencies. *Beowulf* confronts the psychological demands of the reading experience by persistently reaffirming those idioms of speech and patterns of interaction that require the open immediacy of spoken exchange. The confrontations set in conflict not simply the characters of the poem but the psychological structures that the characters epitomize and thus the linguistic practices most compatible with those structures. (MRN)

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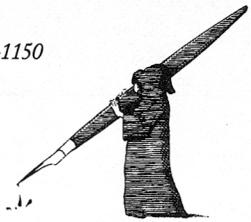
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