

PMMLA

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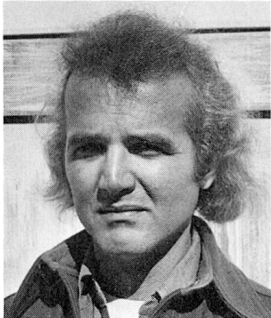
*Publications of the
Modern Language Association
of America*

March 1979

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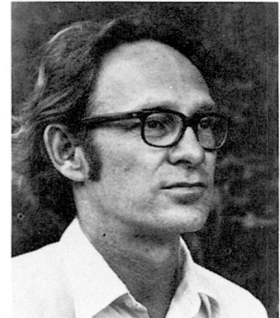
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Russell Banks. "For sheer energy, drive, and life Russell Banks has for several years been a mainstay of American fiction. Nobody else combines an iron grip on regional America with a thoroughly expandable imagination. . . . 'The New World' is magnetically centered, the kind of unequivocally brilliant performance that one can't ever be sure of seeing twice in any writer's career." —*Publishers Weekly*. Banks is a native of New Hampshire who teaches at New England College in Henniker. His stories have been included in *Best American Short Stories* and *O. Henry Prize Stories*. His second novel, *Hamilton Stark*, was published in 1978.

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William Hoffman. "Hoffman's nine skillfully written pieces move with the speed and smoothness of a film sequence. Projected are . . . the lifestyle and consciousness of the American South. The author displays a remarkable versatility in his characterization." —*Publishers Weekly*. Hoffman, now a farmer in Virginia, has had seven novels published by Doubleday. He was formerly with the *Washington Evening Star* and the Chase National Bank, and has been a faculty member and writer-in-residence at Hampden-Sydney College.

The Actes and Monuments

John William Corrington. "[Corrington] is a master of the genre. He wastes no time, slicing through the exteriors of his characters to expose humanity at its most stark and most gripping. He knows the Southern soul and candidly reveals it through fluid, sometimes mesmerizing dialogue." —*Publishers Weekly*. A former teacher of literature, Corrington is now a member of a New Orleans law firm. He has published four volumes of poetry and numerous essays on politics and literature. He is co-author of six screen plays.

Up Where I Used to Live

Max Schott. ". . . lord, how he packs it in! The country and the animals, the society and the talk and, most of all, the men—cowboys and ranchers—with their sure sense of a fate that's letting them down. His subject is one of universal interest, and Schott gives the reader the whole world in a single volume." —*Publishers Weekly*. A former horse-trainer, Schott teaches fiction writing and literature at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His stories have appeared in *Massachusetts Review*, *Ascent*, and *Spectrum*.

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The Wife of Bath and the Painting of Lions.

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Abstract. In order to appreciate fully the Wife of Bath's *correccioun* of clerical teaching concerning marriage, it is necessary to understand what her bourgeois experience was. The legal customs of the bourgeoisie allowed widows and married women rights of contract and property denied to women of other classes. The Wife of Bath was a clothier, not an artisan weaver, whose cloth making was organized in accordance with the entrepreneurial practice of the industry in the west country during the late fourteenth century. The economic context that this bourgeois setting gives to Alisoun's *experience* makes her opinions concerning marital power less eccentric than has heretofore been believed. Her prologue recounts her growth in practical wisdom, culminating in her marriage with the inexperienced Jankyn. Her tale is a parodic rejection of the ideal pictures of genteel marriage painted by the aristocratic, or would-be aristocratic, writers of medieval deparment books. (MC)

Sidney's Feigned <i>Apology</i> . RONALD LEVAO	223
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Abstract. In his *Apology*, Sidney makes what appears to many readers to be an adroit synthesis of humanist defenses of poetry, joining Neoplatonic idealism to claims of ethical utility and delivering this synthesis with the winning playfulness of a shrewd rhetorician. A closer look at his argument, however, reveals it to be a complex and self-conscious fiction, which gestures toward external values only to turn back on its own assumptions. The playful tone shows that Sidney is fascinated by the conceptual difficulties that confront him but that he is incapable of resolving them. Sidney's intellectual performance in the *Apology* demonstrates his affinities with Renaissance thinkers like Nicholas of Cusa, who imagined all mental activity to be a ceaseless fabrication of conjecture and metaphor. (RL)

Epistle, Meditation, and Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*.

ANNE DRURY HALL	234
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Abstract. The *Religio Medici* has traditionally been called "an essay" or "an autobiographical essay." If we examine it in its literary context, however, we will see that the principles generating its style and specifying the range of its feeling derive from two prose modes associated with other, more clearly defined seventeenth-century genres, the anti-Ciceronian epistle and the religious meditation. The *Religio*, in fact, might better be called "a meditation in the epistolary mode." Although the witty exaggeration of Browne's diction often pushes his epistolary voice toward the satiric, he holds off both indignant satire and solitary, self-absorbed meditation. In avoiding these extremes, Browne's mixture of modes makes a clear ethical argument: that human beings must understand their limitations both as individuals in relationship to society and as creatures in relationship to God. In the *Religio*, Browne argues the importance to Christian humanism of the balance between private spirituality and public manners. (ADH)

- Order and Disorder in Rousseau's Social Thought.
LESTER G. CROCKER 247
- Abstract.** The problem of order is central to Rousseau's political and social thought. Nature's order has been ruptured by man's unique ability to conceive of order and cannot be restored; only a properly conceived artificial order can be "natural" and remedy the defects introduced by the original violation. This article examines Rousseau's analysis of disorder in society (inequality, injustice, a "state of war") and in the self (three modes of alienation); the philosophical bases of his theory about an artificial order being "natural" and remedying the designated defects; and the rationale of the means of doing so. The discussion involves two paradigms (the body, Julie's garden) and four paradoxes (completing alienation, remaking nature, "losing" the self to restore it, using inequality to establish equality). Rousseau's vocabulary and rhetoric are shown to support this analysis. In his argument, liberty and submission, self-fulfillment and the authoritarian state, nature and culture cease being antitheses. (LGC)
- The Poetics of Discontinuity: East-West Correspondences in Lyric Poetry. PAULINE YU 261
- Abstract.** This article discusses some characteristic methods and structures shared by modern Western and classical Chinese poetry, focusing on the works of Georg Trakl and major poets of the T'ang dynasty. Among the similarities examined are the preference for concrete imagery over abstract, discursive statement; the paratactical juxtaposition of images, which leaves their logical, temporal, and grammatical relationships unspecified and often ambiguous; and the tendency for images to become "ciphers" that suggest, but do not support, metaphorical interpretation. There is also a reluctance to obtrude a first-person speaker onto the scene, and this has led some critics to label Symbolist–post-Symbolist and Chinese poetry "impersonal"; this essay argues, however, that the hidden subjectivity of even the most "impersonal" poem should not be overlooked. Nevertheless, the omission of subject does frequently increase ambiguities among the other elements of a work and contributes to the "poetics of discontinuity" common to the two traditions. (PY)
- Literary System and Systemic Change: The Prague School Theory of Literary History, 1928–48. F. W. GALAN 275
- Abstract.** Structural linguistics is commonly held to be preoccupied with static language systems at the expense of language history. Yet in the 1920s the Prague Linguistic Circle resolved the structuralist dilemma of a system that ceases to act systemically the moment it undergoes a change. Language changes must be studied not in isolation but with regard to the whole system. No language system, however, is perfectly self-contained, nor can language changes be perfectly predictable, for language must adapt to concrete situations. Similarly, literary history appears largely systemic, but only a semiotic conception can explain its immanent development while simultaneously taking into account extraliterary influences. Prague structuralism thus studies both the internal, systemic changes of literary forms and the sociological aspects involved in their reception by the reading public. Finally, structural literary theory explains the role of individual artists, whose originality is seen as the dialectical antithesis to the systematic literary structure. (FWG)
- Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*.
HUNT HAWKINS 286
- Abstract.** In *Heart of Darkness* Conrad explicitly selected two criteria—efficiency and the "idea" of the civilizing mission—to judge imperialism. Although he him-

self did not ultimately espouse these values (which social Darwinists used to justify European expansion), he chose them because they were popular and well-suited to condemning the peculiar exploitation of the Congo by King Leopold II. Unlike capital-rich imperialism, which could seek long-term development, Leopold's capital-poor imperialism resulted in hasty exploitation of surface resources through forced labor. Conrad's story powerfully illustrated the special inefficiency and cruelty of such exploitation. As in his other colonial novels, Conrad went on to imply a further judgment against all types of imperialism, even England's, because of their complicity, belligerence, and arrogant disruption of indigenous cultures. (HH)

“Voice” in Narrative Texts: The Example of *As I Lay Dying*.
STEPHEN M. ROSS 300

Abstract. In discussions of fiction, the implications of the term “voice” are seldom explored beyond its figurative uses. In *As I Lay Dying*, however, “voice” is central to our experience of narrative. The novel has two kinds of voice, mimetic and textual. Mimetic voice derives from represented speech, from the features of discourse by which readers identify speakers; but Faulkner's novel dissimulates the origins of voices. The voices we hear turn out to belong to narrators and seem to originate in an author's discourse. Textual voice arises from the printed text itself. Such features as italics, drawings, lists, and section headings generate signification independent of verbal meaning and establish an expressive context analogous to the paralinguistic context created by the voice in speech. As a result of the disruption of mimetic voices and of the presence of textual voice, language in *As I Lay Dying* transcends the conventional limitations of mimesis. (SMR)

Supernaturalism and the Vernacular Style in *A Farewell to Arms*. GEORGE DEKKER AND JOSEPH HARRIS 311

Abstract. Muted allusions to second sight and revenants are crucial to the method and meaning of *A Farewell to Arms*. Like Joyce, Pound, and Eliot, Hemingway draws on European sources—particularly ballads—for his folkloristic motifs; like them, he uses these motifs to invest chaotic contemporary scenes with order and universal significance. For him to adapt the “mythical method” of these writers, however, is a formidable problem, since his vernacular rhetoric cannot accommodate their open, bookish allusions. Consequently, his references to prophetic gifts and returns from the dead, while undeniably present, are not prominent enough to have attracted the critical attention they deserve. For they point and contribute to an unresolved dialectic, between skeptical male and “*croyante*” female, that is characteristic not only of the Catherine-Frederic relationship but, Hemingway implies, of all love relationships between men and women. (GD and JH)

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