Abstracts

Glenn Burger, Kissing the Pardoner   1143

The conceptual dominance of the "heterosexual" in modern thinking has conditioned us, when we consider the *Canterbury Tales,* to think about the Pardoner and his audience in essentialist terms. The Pardoner and the Host's kiss, however, stills and defers attempts by the masculine gaze of Harry and the "redeemed" pilgrims to control what the Pardoner means. By returning meaning to circulation, the kiss provides an instance in which the Pardoner's body can do more than simply deconstruct categories or gesture elsewhere for meaning. Offering an alternative view of the Pardoner's supposed "destructive otherness," this essay suggests that his true import lies not in his alterity but in his similarity to the other pilgrims and ultimately to us as readers—in short, that the Pardoner constitutes the "open secret" of the Canterbury project. (GB)

Michaela Paasche Grudin, Discourse and the Problem of Closure in the *Canterbury Tales*   1157

Critical restiveness with Chaucer's "unsatisfactory" endings points to one of his most profound strategies. In the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer finds at least a dozen ways to ignore, skirt, transcend, or even anticipate structural closure in favor of an engagement between the narrative and its responding audience that fundamentally works against closure. By repeatedly subverting conventional closure, he turns our attention to the dynamics of discourse as social interaction. He creates in the *Canterbury Tales* a *copia* of the human motives—social, psychological, or political—that generate communication and misunderstanding. Chaucer's sense of closure casts light on the narrative frame and on the so-called Retraction. The subversion of conventional closure, instead of undermining the text, often enriches it, deeply characterizing his whole attitude toward discourse and toward knowledge. In Chaucer's epistemology nothing is ever complete. (MPG)

John H. Fisher, A Language Policy for Lancastrian England   1168

Until after 1400 the official language of England was French. Colloquial English began to be used in court circles in the fourteenth century, but government and culture continued to be carried on in French and Latin until the advent of the Lancastrian administration of Henry IV and V, who reigned 1399–1422. Historians of the language have not made a connection between this political development and the introduction of writing in English, but the interest of Henry IV and V in promoting English is demonstrable. Immediately after 1400 there was an acceleration of publishing in English. The kings and their ministers, especially Henry Beaufort and Thomas Chaucer, may have commissioned the publication of the writings of Gower and Chaucer and the compositions of Lydgate and Hoccleve as a means toward achieving the sort of prestige for English that the English public had previously accorded only to French. (JHF)

Stephen M. Fallon, Hunting the Fox: Equivocation and Authorial Duplicity in *The Prince*   1181

Machiavelli's chapter on *fortuna,* which distills the teachings of *The Prince,* promises success to the prince who will adapt to the times. But when Machiavelli adds that one can never adapt, he implicitly withdraws the promise and leaves the prince naked before fortune. While others view this chapter as the shoal on which the text's optimistic

teaching runs aground, I argue that the failure is strategic; like Machiavelli's anomalous treatment of Cesare Borgia, it points to the coherence underlying an apparently inconsistent text. In appropriately Machiavellian fashion, the work is not, as it purports to be, a handbook on princely success. Instead, it represents a characteristically audacious attempt to reconcile self-serving aims: to secure the author employment, to spur the Medici on to the task of unifying Italy, and, paradoxically, to draw his prospective employers and the potential instruments of Italian glory—once they have served his threefold purpose—to their ruin. (SMF)

Alice Kuzniar, Hearing Woman's Voices in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*   1196

In his novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* Novalis eroticizes and idealizes the female voice as unmediated poetic utterance expressing the body. Women write from the breast, with their own fluids for ink. Personifying poetry, the female character puts the burgeoning male author into an impossible position: he cannot master what she represents unless he switches gender. The mother-beloved herself undergoes constant transformation in the novel, turning into flowers, trees, and other characters. Female metamorphosis challenges androcentric *Bildung,* as Heinrich progressively draws on female qualities. The migratory female voice finds its way into two other German Romantic tales, Heinrich von Kleist's "Die heilige Cäcilie" and E. T. A. Hoffmann's "Rat Krespel." In contrast to *Heinrich von Ofterdingen,* these works travesty the attempt to mimic the female voice. (AK)

Herbert F. Tucker, Epiphany and Browning: Character Made Manifest   1208

The fortunes of epiphany indicate both recent historical disparities within literary criticism and current cultural disparities between academic and popular discourse. The contextualist practice of Wordsworth and Joyce, in contrast to the purist theory that arose with the New Criticism, suggests that epiphany is a narrative device underscoring the historical and cultural construction of character. This conception is borne out by the original Epiphany, in Matthew, which manifests divine personality to human eyes through an episode of cultural difference and accommodation. Robert Browning's historicist poetry uses comparable but secular means of manifesting personality. In his dramatic monologues "Karshish," "My Star," and "'Transcendentalism,'" epiphanic themes serve as measures of their speakers' cultural construction. In discerning the relative differentiae that characterize such speakers, Browning's readers encounter their own relativity to interpretive conditions. As these examples imply, the modern literary epiphany ultimately effects the hermeneutic manifestation of the reader. (HFT)

Xiaobing Tang, Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" and a Chinese Modernism 1222

A critical rereading of Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman," a canonical text in modern Chinese literature, suggests a need to invoke modernism as a historicizing concept and to rethink modern Chinese literary historiography. Contrary to the conventional view of Lu Xun's story as no more than a realist fiction, the new interpretation shows how the work persistently and ingeniously articulates a modernist sensibility of time as well as a modernist politics of language. The Madman's madness not only expresses a self-consciousness that is radically modern in its break with a traditional gemeinschaft but also demarcates a new, oppositional symbolic order and practice. At the forefront of

the historical New Culture movement, this archetypal text of deconstructive reading simultaneously promises a critical and a productive discursive strategy. The work's modernism, finally, requires modernity to be understood as both a concrete historical experience and a global situation. (XT)

Edna Aizenberg, Historical Subversion and Violence of Representation in García Márquez and Ouologuem   1235

The rediscovery of history, a recent literary-critical event, is problematic in its elision of the non-Western past and its subsumption of non-Western fictional works. Likewise, some new studies on the interplay of violence and representation, while offered as critiques of Western discourse, ignore significant earlier Third World theorizations. This essay, in focusing on Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Yambo Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence,* aims to reinstate the absent history: those Third World conditions and exigencies that link postcolonial novels and a desire to think historically. Both books adopt a violent narrative strategy that reflects their status as products of a ruptured history scarred by imperialization. (EA)

Liliane Papin, This Is Not a Universe: Metaphor, Language, and Representation   1253

Positivist science has been marked by its reliance on an objective, transparent, and purely descriptive language, an approach that modern philosophers of science have questioned and rejected. With the advent of the theory of relativity, followed by the theoretical framework of quantum physics, many physicists themselves have been led to wrestle with the traditional concept of representation and language. They have joined poets and literary critics in questioning the definition and function of metaphor. Echoing Magritte's famous "This is not a pipe," David Bohm and David Peat suggest "this is not a universe" as an inscription to be borne in mind for each new scientific hypothesis. Scientific metaphors as well as literary metaphors need to be recognized, unity and difference unfolded. This exploration of "metaphorical play" might help define fields of interpretation and true interdisciplinary convergence, which is only a broadening of metaphorical activity. (LP)

Jeffrey T. Nealon, The Discipline of Deconstruction   1266

This essay reexamines the institutional rise and fall of deconstruction as a reading method in American literary criticism. Deconstruction was, to put it bluntly, commodified for an American market, simplified and watered down for use in how-to books that gave (and continue to give) a generation of literature students an overview of what was supposedly Derrida's work without paying corresponding attention to his texts. The deconstructive criticism of de Man and Hillis Miller is too often conflated with Derrida's thought—especially surrounding the question of undecidability—and this confusion misses essential questions that Derrida poses to any critical enterprise. For rhetorical deconstructive criticism, undecidability is the end revealed by reading, whereas for Derrida undecidability is only the first movement in a necessarily double economy. The essay concludes with a discussion of Derrida's own inscription within the institutional debate over deconstruction. (JTN)