
Abstracts

Pamela L. Caughie, Let It Pass: Changing the Subject, Once Again 26

The recent controversial transformation of the humanities is due partly to the institutional acknowledgment of diversity and partly to critics' efforts to theorize difference and to destabilize the categories of identity on which programs devoted to the study of diversity are founded. This double agenda creates anxiety over the positions we find ourselves in as scholars and teachers in the newly configured university. My essay offers a means of working through this tension: a performative pedagogy based on a descriptive theory of the dynamics of passing. I exemplify this dynamic by reading debates on white feminists' appropriation of black women's writing, comparing student responses to the 1934 film *Imitation of Life*, and discussing Fannie Hurst's novel on which the film is based. I posit the pedagogical relation as the privileged site where passing, which is inevitable in any subject position, can be enacted and made explicit. (PLC)

Carrie Noland, Poetry at Stake: Blaise Cendrars, Cultural Studies, and the Future of Poetry in the Literature Classroom 40

Cultural studies has tended to neglect poetic texts, but poetry is in fact well suited to provoke classroom debates concerning the cultural construction of the aesthetic object, as Blaise Cendrars's *Dix-neuf poèmes élastiques* (*Nineteen Elastic Poems*) confirms. Bakhtin's notion of the heteroglossic helps to demonstrate that Cendrars's poems are also "rejoinders" in a dialogue with their institutional other: advertising. But Cendrars does not merely claim advertising as poetic material; he identifies poetry as a form of advertisement. Cendrars suggests that the symbolic capital of poetry cannot exist unless the poem brings attention to itself by means of a practice that it posits, paradoxically, as its other. However, the fact that poetry is constructed by advertising its difference does not make poetry equivalent to advertising. Cultural studies reveals the institutional construction of poetry, but only close textual analysis can highlight the semiotic distinctions between poetry and advertising that institutional boundaries engender. (CN)

Betsy Keller, Rereading Flaubert: Toward a Dialogue between First- and Second-Language Literature Teaching Practices 56

There are many disparities in literary competence between teachers and students. It is emblematic of these differences that students in introductory college literature courses usually read assigned texts only once, while the teacher's normative experience involves multiple rereadings. For inexperienced readers in these classes, the task of acquiring literary competence may seem as difficult as learning a foreign language. Research in the study of foreign languages and literatures contains valuable insights for the teaching of first-language literature. The traditional lecture-and-discussion format fails to address the individual student's background knowledge, motivation for literary study, and personal response to texts. Prereading activities, tasks to accompany at-home reading, and collaborative strategies in class discussion can lead readers to engage texts more meaningfully in the introductory literature classroom. (BK)

David R. Shumway, The Star System in Literary Studies 85

A new form of intellectual authority and professional status has emerged in literary studies since the 1970s. Although some scholars have always been more influential and famous than others, only recently have such scholars been constructed as stars in the media and in the profession. This star system, similar to the one that flourished in studio-era Hollywood, makes leading scholars into personalities. It is related to the growth of the conference and lecture circuit and to the rise of literary theory. Although this system does not necessarily reward the wrong people, it does contribute to the public delegitimation of the discipline. (DRS)
