Abstracts

Derek Attridge, Innovation, Literature, Ethics: Relating to the Other   20

Innovation in cultural practice is both an act and an event whereby the other is brought into and comes into being. I call the private aspect of this process *creation* and the public aspect, by which innovation gives rise to further innovation, *invention*. A related phenomenon is the responsible encounter with the human other; in both, the subject's modes of understanding undergo change as the subject registers and affirms the singularity of the other. A further domain to which this account applies is reading, another act-event in which a responsible response entails an innovative affirmation of innovation. Responding to the literary work involves performing its verbal forms. The responsibility invoked in all these instances is responsibility *for* rather than *to*, since the other is brought into existence (and transformed from other to same) by the subject's response. The ethical obligation implied here is, as Levinas argues, prior to any philosophical account we could give of it. (DA)

David P. Haney, Aesthetics and Ethics in Gadamer, Levinas, and Romanticism: Problems of Phronesis and Techne   32

Aristotle's distinction between phronesis, or ethical knowledge, and techne, or productive knowledge, is relevant both to Romantic and to modern discussions of the relations between aesthetic and ethical experience. Wordsworth and Coleridge try in different ways to negotiate between the two kinds of knowledge, advocating the ethical force of poetry while acknowledging its status as techne; in contrast, modern criticism tends either to accept the ubiquity of techne or to revive phronesis while undervaluing the tension between the two. Hans-Georg Gadamer and Emmanuel Levinas provide a way to link phronesis to aesthetic autonomy through the means-end unity of phronesis and the ethical claim of the other, although Gadamer overemphasizes the autonomy of the artwork and Levinas underemphasizes the ethical possibilities of the aesthetic. Wordsworth and Coleridge present the ethical encounter with the other as in tension with techne, but they also show that tension itself to be ethically significant. (DPH)

James M. Albrecht, Saying Yes and Saying No: Individualist Ethics in Ellison, Burke, and Emerson   46

The allusions to Emerson in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* are usually read as a scathing indictment of Emersonian individualism. Yet even as Ellison satirizes the Emerson canonized in Lewis Mumford's *The Golden Day*, the career of Ellison's narrator extends a pragmatic tradition of individualism leading from Emerson through Kenneth Burke. Though often accused of ignoring tragic limits, Emerson describes the self as existing only within the material limitations of culture—and thus as always socially implicated and indebted. While Emerson claims that the pursuit of one's own most vital work is a moral end that fulfills one's social duties, Burke and Ellison demand more complex scrutiny of one's ethical connections to others. Burke insists that the social context of our individual acts requires a comic ethics of identification: we must identify with others across social conflicts and recognize how our individual acts may be identified with those conflicts. Ellison's narrator progresses toward this Burkean ethic: in his final confrontation with Mr. Norton (who has recommended Emerson to him), the narrator adopts a mode of communication that asserts the democratic connection of all Americans at the same time that it confronts the systemic discrimination that separates them. (JMA)

Bradley Butterfield, Ethical Value and Negative Aesthetics: Reconsidering the Baudrillard-Ballard Connection   64

Like today's masses, the characters in J. G. Ballard's *Crash* are fascinated by what Jean Baudrillard calls the accident, especially when it involves the death of a celebrity. Ballard's

characters, however, reenact their accidents as sexual rituals of a marriage between technology and death that are beyond the realm of moral judgment, making *Crash* sci-fi, hypothetical, unrealistic. Calling *Crash* "the first great novel of the universe of simulation," Jean Baudrillard has drawn heavy criticism for missing the alleged moral point, both in *Crash* and in the still-real world. As a fiction writer, Ballard is given a wide moral berth, but when Baudrillard's theory turns sci-fi, the question of ethical boundaries is broached, and leniency is less likely. In defense of Baudrillard, I read him, like Ballard, in the Nietzschean tradition of a purposefully amoral, negative aestheticism, which I argue is of value to ethics and radical politics in a world governed by instrumental simulacra. (BB)

Mary Beth Tierney-Tello, Testimony, Ethics, and the Aesthetic in Diamela Eltit   78

Two works by the Chilean writer Diamela Eltit, *El Padre Mío* (1989) and *El infarto del alma* (1994; produced in collaboration with Paz Errázuriz), contain an undeniable testimonial impulse that aligns them with *testimonio*, a genre of subaltern personal narrative that has emerged with new force in Latin America in recent decades. Yet these texts, which present subjects who are mentally ill, incoherent, or lacking identities, call into question some of the key assumptions about testimonial practice and its reception, disrupting the usual responses of identification with and empathy for the narrator. By reading and writing testimonial discourse through a postmodern aesthetic, Eltit advocates the recognition of testimonial subjects as producers and agents of culture rather than as victims in need of compassion. Her project, with its particular merging of the aesthetic and the ethical, constitutes a local yet politically urgent attempt at rethinking the predominant conceptualizations of marginal culture, refusing the notion that the aesthetic is the exclusive privilege of elite culture. (MBT-T)