

PMLA

Volume 92
Number 1

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of America*

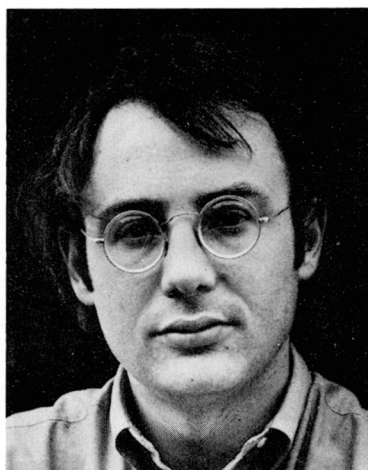
January 1977

Harriet Monroe and the Poetry Renaissance



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The Wife Who Goes Out like a Man, Comes Back as a Hero:
The Art of Two Oregon Indian Narratives. JAROLD W. RAMSEY 9

Abstract. Interpreted along structuralist lines, the Clackamas Chinook story "Seal and Her Younger Brother Dwelt There" is a skillful dramatization of a fatal conflict between two goods: decorum and empirical alertness. Seal's adult concern with propriety keeps her from heeding her daughter's warning that Seal's brother's new "wife" "urinates like a man." In the subsequent murder of Seal's brother, the motives and identity of the homicidal "wife" are deliberately obscured so as to emphasize the tragic conflict between Seal and her daughter. Another Oregon Indian text, "The Revenge against the Sky People" (Coos), contains a version of the Clackamas story, but overall it is a narrative of heroic revenge, in which the killer's motives and feelings are made known to us before he kills his victim. The two stories complement each other structurally and together represent Indian narrative art at its best. (JWR)

He Could Go No Farther: A Modest Proposal about Lovelace
and Clarissa. JUDITH WILT 19

Abstract. Critics have averted their eyes from the specifics of Lovelace's rape of Clarissa almost as hurriedly as did the principals in Richardson's novel. Modern studies of the phenomenon of rape suggest that a closer look might be rewarding. Of the three people certainly present at the episode, there is good reason to suppose Lovelace impotent, Clarissa blankly rigid, and Sinclair, the presiding androgynous harlot, the purposeful actor in the scene. If Sinclair and the "women of the house" are at the heart of the book's action and are not simply Lovelace's "implements," then a prime issue of *Clarissa* is not only whether Clarissa "lives" but also whether Sinclair "dies." In fact, despite her famous Gothic death scene, Sinclair too lives, and rules Richardson's imagination of woman, perhaps even of Being, to the end of the novel. (JW)

Tartuffe and the Mysteries. MARCEL GUTWIRTH 33

Abstract. The invention of *Tartuffe* is decisive in the evolution of Molière's art. As parasite, he shifts the action of the comedy indoors, accenting both inwardness and concealment. As agent of the father's "holy experiment," he inaugurates the Andromeda scheme whereby Molière's fathers regularly will hand over a beloved daughter to the misfit who mirrors the dark state of their own souls. As charlatan of piety, he poses a challenge to the age which his creator was to pay for dearly in a five-year struggle to gain for his play the freedom of the stage. Though the denouement of *Tartuffe* is essentially political—reflecting the challenge by a political cabal to its right to exist—the comedy proper ends with its villain stripped of the protective cloak of the religion of an *unseen* Presence, by an appeal to the palpable truth of the religion of ancient Greece where comedy originated. (MG)

The Court as Text: Inversion, Supplanting, and Derangement in
Kafka's *Der Prozeß*. HENRY SUSSMAN 41

Abstract. Kafka's writings have been illuminated by a spectrum of critical attitudes encompassing theological, psychological, ontological, and existential interpretations. In the present interpretation of *Der Prozeß*, language, reading, and writing subvert these categories while being bound to them. The Court functions as a literary text, extending and erasing itself and exacting an exchange of writing from its servants and wards. Joseph K., like *der Mann* in the parable of the doorkeeper, is excluded from the Law while claimed by it. This paradox characterizes K.'s experience. Like literary language, the Court seems to be identical to everyday existence, but, in the multiplicity of the often mutually negating legal interpretations that it entertains and in its anaerobic atmosphere, the Court defines itself as the negation of existence and its logic. *Der Prozeß* thus demarcates the border between literature and the life it seems to represent. (HS)

- The Tongue and Its Office in *The Revenger's Tragedy*. J. L. SIMMONS 56
- Abstract.** Lussurioso's valedictory in *The Revenger's Tragedy*—"My tongue is out of office"—isolates a dominant image that Cyril Tourneur adapted from the Kydian revenge play, particularly *Titus Andronicus* where the mutilation of Lavinia represents the gothic assault on the definitively human ability to speak and the cancellation of the eloquent bond that creates a just society. Whereas Shakespeare finally affirms this classical idealization of rhetoric, Tourneur accentuates the opposing tradition of rhetoric as the ability to flatter, seduce, and speak unjustly. He employs the biblical concept of the fiery tongue as a quasi-independent organ with psychic and ethical potency. In Tourneur's world of "nimble and desperate tongues," the linguistic glory of man becomes a phallic and self-destructive act that justifies Vindice's moral degeneration and tragic end. With other images that ironically evoke lost ideals of Renaissance humanism, imagery of the tongue helps to illuminate the grotesque Jacobean darkness of the play. (JLS)
- Mrs. Dalloway* and the Social System. ALEX ZWERDLING 69
- Abstract.** In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf wanted, as she says, "to criticise the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense." Her critical attention is focused not on individuals but on the values of a particular class at a particular historical moment. Her novel examines the governing class's control over English society in the period immediately following the First World War, showing how coercive the ideal of stoical fortitude nurtured during the War had become by the time it was over. The dominant faith in the value of self-control creates an atmosphere of emotional austerity that in one way or another affects the behavior of all the characters in the novel. It inhibits the natural expression of feeling in those who live by the governing-class code and turns the more rebellious members of the society into unstable emotional exhibitionists. (AZ)
- Detachment and Engagement in Shakespeare's Sonnets: 94, 116, and 129. CAROL THOMAS NEELY 83
- Abstract.** Sonnets 94, 116, and 129 are unique in their mode and function. They are general, impersonal, deliberately detached from the conflicts explored in surrounding sonnets. However, the model created in each sonnet breaks down, resulting in heightened conflict in ensuing sonnets. Sonnet 94 creates a hypothetical "they" who share the conventional Petrarchan beloved's incorruptible beauty and self-possession. But as the sonnet proceeds, the model collapses, and the corruption of the friend is painfully confronted in Sonnets 95 and 96. Similarly, the abstract model of perfect love in 116 is qualified in the couplet and destroyed in Sonnet 117. Sonnet 129 begins by defining lust as, like the love of 116, absolute and inalterable, but concludes in paradox, thus serving as a paradigmatic introduction to the dark lady sonnets. These three sonnets, however detached and immobile, participate in the ceaseless flow of the sequence, reacting to or acting upon the surrounding sonnets. (CTN)
- The Continuity of Milton's Sonnets. WILLIAM MCCARTHY 96
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- A Matter of Style: Stative and Dynamic Predicates. CAREY MCINTOSH 110
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extensive evidence that eighteenth-century prose is more nominal than early seventeenth-century prose: eighteenth-century authors choose to express meaning in terms of stative relations between nouns, rather than in terms of actions or events. This preference may be considered as a matter of literary style, and perhaps also as an episode in the history of the evolution of modern English. (CMcI)

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