

ABSTRACTS

Some Versions of Nothing

Ciaran Murray

The author, who has previously traced the influence of the Japanese garden on Romanticism and that of the Japanese print on Aestheticism, here sketches the influence of Japanese theater, with the associated ideology of Zen, on Modernism. Zen incorporates the Indian philosophy of “nothing” (*shūmya*), to be found in the mathematical concept of zero, as filtered through Fenollosa and others, such as the visitor to Japan (Leo Stein) whose insights are echoed throughout Hemingway’s aesthetic formulations, from the soliloquies of Nick Adams to his acknowledgement of the Nobel award. It shapes the voids to be found in the pictures of Whistler; the silences in the poetry of Pound; the unstated subjects of Hemingway’s stories, the perilous spaces of his bullfights and the transcendence of ego in the face of danger encountered in these, as well as in his war correspondence; and in Yeats’s evocations of enlightenment on the field of battle.

Narratorial Consciousness as an Intersection of Culture and Narrative (Case Study: Toni Morrison’s *Jazz*)

Zoltán Abádi-Nagy

A new addition to the author’s culturalization-of-narrative-project series, this essay probes narratorial consciousness, investigating what narratorial mindset, with what kind of cultural determination, produces and rules the narrative text and how that cultural given shapes the text. The subjects explored in both theoretical terms and as case-study (Toni Morrison’s *Jazz*) are: the narrator’s position (the jazz-narrator, the narrator-as-jazz-in-action, and cultural voice) as well as narratorial functions (story-telling, reflective, self-reflective functions, and the performative function of culture as jazz).

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The Cash Value of Old Words: James and Rorty on the Language of Experience

Scott Campbell

Richard Rorty uses Nietzsche to show that people need to create themselves because there is no foundationalist language which they can establish as an anchor. Although this perspective is Nietzschean, it is not Jamesian, and so Rorty misappropriates James when he conflates James and Nietzsche as like-minded progenitors of the mythologizing of a privileged vocabulary. This essay evaluates Rorty's reading of James by considering whether truth in Rorty's textualist sense can abide by the stream of thought. Although James does mythologize privileged vocabularies, he believes that words need to reflect the world *more accurately* (something Rorty would never say) by abiding by the flux of experience. As such, James recognizes the value that old words have as tools. Whereas Rorty shows disdain for old words, James shows us the cash value those words have in helping us to do anything from paying our bills to constructing more practical and effective theories.

Britain-Hanover and the Imperial Election of 1745

Márta Vajnági

This essay aims at the investigation of the (mal)functioning of the Anglo-Habsburg cooperation during the War of the Austrian Succession by giving an in-depth analysis on a less-explored chapter of their relationship, namely, the imperial election of 1745. Since King George II was British King and Elector of Hanover at the same time, he was not only a military ally of Austria, but he could also exert direct influence on the election of the head of the Empire. Based on archival sources, the paper examines the role of British subsidies in the election, the Hanoverian negotiations on the price of George II's electoral vote, and the realization of the cooperation at the electoral meetings in Frankfurt. The essay also inquires the reasons of malfunctions in the election issue as well as how and why the parties failed to reinforce their alliance in this cooperation.

“If equal affection cannot be, / Let the more loving one be me”:

Auden in Love

Zsuzsa Rawlinson

The essay sets out to identify the typical Auden note along with the typical and incomparable Auden voice with special reference to his love lyrics. In the personal, everyday things of life, such as the subject of love which fills a great place in the Auden canon, the poet seems to have triumphed in giving memorable phrases, fragments of truths, recognized and half-recognized experiences and images which “find a mirror in every mind.” Auden sees love, as the selection of poems effectively illustrates, in all its aspects—as subject for joy, mockery, penitence, resignation, revision, despair; and as a consequence, his poems are still constantly frequented and in full view.

“Death’s Echo” and “Danse Macabre”: Auden and the Medieval Tradition of Death Lyrics

Éva Bús

In thought as well as in imagery, two of Auden’s poems, “Death’s Echo” and “Danse Macabre,” appear to draw on such diverse manifestations of the medieval cult of death as lyric poems of *memento mori*, dialogues between the “quick and the dead,” and the macabre tradition in morality plays. Combining the concept of the verbal icon (Wimsatt) with the principles of the theory of metaphor, as summarized by Ricoeur in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1977), the paper studies a selection of medieval poems and those of Auden as complex macro-vehicles and contrasts the possible tenors they are carrying.

The Experience of Reading and Writing Poetry: Auden and Philip Larkin

István D. Rác

This paper focuses on the interfaces of two outstanding British authors of the 20th century. In a review Philip Larkin characterized Auden as “not only one of the century’s major poets but one of its most complex characters.” This suggestion summarizes Larkin’s own experience of reading Auden (both his poetry and his life story), which is as complex as the older poet’s

verse and character: it ranges from Larkin's admiration of the older poet in the 1940s through a refusal of thirties poetry and seeing Auden's work as a composite whole. Although Larkin believed in "primary" experience and despised those who kept on referring to other poets and poems in their own verse, Auden's poetry is undoubtedly a source of inspiration for him, and he may be seen as a father figure haunting Larkin's texts.

Munro's Auden: *Letters from Iceland*

Andrea Szabó F.

The essay examines W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice's *Letters from Iceland* as seen through Alice Munro's short story "The Bear Came Over the Mountain." After elaborating on Munro's first use of the Auden intertext—later adding a reading of its quasi-companion piece, "White Dump"—the essay gradually develops the interweaving strands of Auden's and Munro's thought, such as their interest in Norse mythology, their choice of subject matter that is not far removed from their audience's life, their interest in popular culture, their penchant for embracing sexual experience as a vital fact of life, their delight in artifice, their impulse to use techniques of dislocation, the play with genre, gender, intertextuality, and the fascination with "northernness." Finally, the argument is made that the quest for knowledge and its representation play a vital role in the thematics of both authors, which makes *Letters from Iceland* an essential albeit bizarre travel guide to Munro's poetics. (KM)

W. H. Auden in the Century of Moloch: The Poet's Biography and His Poetry of War

Donald E. Morse

The twentieth century into which W. H. Auden was born in 1907 had been greeted with such optimism that Ellen Key named it "The Century of the Child"—a label that became increasingly bitterly ironic as war by war the century progressed. By mid-century the American literary historian Van Wyck Brooks moved to label it more appropriately: "There has never been an age that moved so swiftly from summer into winter—, or from what appeared to be summer—, as the age we have lived through . . . that turned into the century of Moloch, the eater of children" (159). For a poet such as

Auden, involved in major political, theological, and social issues of his time, the wars of the twentieth century and their effects became almost inevitably a central, on-going subject and when not the direct subject, then became the omnipresent background for his poetry.

Psychoanalysis, Deconstruction, and Ethics: *The Claims of Literature* and the Theoretical Stakes of Shoshana Felman's Writings

Gyula Somogyi

Inspired by a recent collection of Shoshana Felman's writings, *The Claims of Literature*, the review essay focuses on the theoretical trajectories of Felman's oeuvre, whose work contributed substantially to our understanding of key issues of psychoanalysis, body studies, feminism, trauma, and legal studies. Navigating between Lacanian psychoanalysis and Paul de Man's rhetorical deconstruction, in *Writing and Madness* Felman positioned the notion of transference as the most important metaphor of psychoanalytic reading. *The Scandal of the Speaking Body's* pathbreaking rereading of speech act theory led to an ever-growing interest in the body. In *What Does a Woman Want?* Felman visualizes the female reader and female desire as a deconstructive force which can reveal the internal ambiguities and incongruities that reside within a (male) text, be it a literary or philosophical one. From these theoretical issues Felman turned to questions of witnessing, trauma and the Holocaust in *Testimony*, while in *The Juridicial Unconscious* she tries to find answers to how the language of law and the study of law can deal with the notion of trauma.