

## ABSTRACTS

### 9/11 Conspiracy Theories

Beáta Sáfrány

Although the anger and hatred provoked by the horrible events of 9/11 might have been soothed by the news of Osama bin Laden's capture, the idea that the truth about the attacks has not been uncovered even ten years after that fateful day still lurks in some people's mind. This idea is fed upon by the ever-seductive conspiracy theories which propagate two major interpretations: the MIHOP (made-it-happen-on-purpose) and the LIHOP (let-it-happen-on-purpose) explanation. The essay describes and debunks the most popular 9/11 conspiracy theories in both categories. (BS)

### Marking, Consciousness, Fabulation: The Lady's Presence in Shelley's "Sensitive Plant"

János V. Barcsák

The essay analyzes Percy Bysshe Shelley's somewhat neglected narrative poem "Sensitive Plant" and argues that the text incorporates three distinct layers of narrative: the fable told in Parts First and Second, the meta-fable narrated in Part Third, and a meta-meta-fable appearing in the Conclusion. It interprets the fable of the first two sections as primarily functioning to outline a conception of self-consciousness by opposing it to nature and to natural process. This conception is then deconstructed in the meta-fable of Part Third, which undermines the oppositions of Parts First and Second relying on the demystifying power of death. This questioning of the authority of the original fable by the negativity of death is, in turn, undermined by the Conclusion. In particular, this section questions the reality of death and asserts the survival of the Lady who appears in Part Second as the principle of order in nature and apparently dies before the demystifying movement of death begins the meta-fable. Most interpretations of the poem consider this closing as a kind of tag, expressing a "logocentric dream" and not forming an integral part of the main text. The essay argues, in contrast to this opinion, that the assertion of the Lady's survival necessarily follows from the structure of the previous narrative; more particularly, from the fact that the Lady's presence is unmarked from the start. This way the Conclusion forms an integral part of the narrative as

a whole and can even be said to account for the genesis of the first two layers of the fable. This meta-meta-fable can even be seen as offering a fable of all fabulation. (JB)

### **Being Bemused by National Pride: George Orwell's Patriotism during the Second World War**

Ivett Császár

Orwell's intensifying attachment to his homeland during the Second World War might appear contradictory to his confessed commitment to "democratic socialism." If, however, one takes into account his strong identification with the traditional ideal of masculinity and acknowledges that patriotism has been an integral part of traditional masculinity, the contradiction becomes intelligible. Examining three patriotic essays written during the war—"My Country Right or Left" (1939), "The Lion and the Unicorn" (1940), "The English People" (1944)—from the aspect of gender, the essay explores how Orwell's unconditional and uncritical acquiescence in the myth of national unity informed his views on masculinity and femininity. Orwell's implicit vision of a male-centered English society with women relegated to motherhood and prostitution is in no way radically different from the explicit gender ideology of German fascism against which he sought to fight. His lack of consideration for women, his way of habitually connecting femininity to negative concepts like passivity, and his representation of women either as idle bourgeoisie, prostitutes, or, at best, mothers of the nation, belies to some extent the general view of him as a socially sensitive writer. (ICs)

### **Charles Brockden Brown's *Alcuin* and Women's Rights in Eighteenth-Century United States**

Ali Shehzad Zaidi

The essay situates *Alcuin* within a historical context of debate about the education and rights of women in the late eighteenth century. Written in the form of dialogues between a young schoolteacher and a widowed socialite, *Alcuin* is now recognized as the first published fictional work by the first major novelist of the United States. In this seminal work, Brown affirms Mary Wollstonecraft's compelling vision of the equality of the sexes while exposing the patronizing tone of contemporary male discourse on women.

*Alcuin* is a deft piece of literature which undermines faith in the apparent enlightenment of its time. (ASZ)

### **Liminal Places and Zora Neale Hurston's Religio-Cultural Space in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *Jonah's Gourd Vine***

Péter Gaál-Szabó

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya describe the Black Church in terms of a “black sacred cosmos,” which reflects a “particular cultural and historical configuration” of the African American community. Their concept can be well adopted to Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *Jonah's Gourd Vine* to analyze her concept of a specific religio-cultural space. Her sacred cosmos constructed on the function of such binaries as the sacred and the profane, folk and institutional religion, as well as Christian and non-Christian religiosity often also contributes to the construction of liminal places. Despite the tension inherent in her spatiality due to these binaries and its heterogeneity of many kinds, Hurston manages to establish a nurturing spatial framework of cultural implosion that proves an autonomous social/cultural space in the American scene. (PG-Sz)

### **Anxious Masculinity and Silencing in Ernest Hemingway's “Mr. and Mrs. Elliot”**

Teodóra Dömötör

The essay investigates Hemingway's ambiguous representation of masculinity in his short story “Mr. and Mrs. Elliot.” Hemingway's preoccupation with gender crisis—a cultural trend prominent in the Roaring Twenties—facilitates the textual manipulation that he applies in this story. He utilizes hiatus, silence, masking, and other methods to frustrate the reader's expectations and, by extension, challenge the standardized interpretation of the plot. Hemingway ventures into an exploration of men's frailty: “Mrs and Mrs. Elliot” portrays the sentiment of a defeated American man through images highlighting personal tragedies. Extreme relationship dysfunction, latent homosexuality, and repressed frustration reveal modernist sensibility in this story, underlining how contemporary heteronormative hegemony, social conventions, and inadequate role models disturbed the successful formation of gender identity in early 1920s United States (TD).

## **The Biotechnological Uncanny: Frank Miller's *Ronin***

Pramod K. Nayar

The essay argues that Frank Miller's graphic novel, *Ronin*, is a text that offers a vision of techno-capitalism through the aesthetics of the uncanny. The uncanny is at once technological and organic, as biology meshes with fantasy and technology. Beginning by examining Miller's primitivism, the essay then modulates into a discussion of the hi-tech as uncanny as Miller underscores the "problem" of the foreign body. Miller creates a confusion of categories wherein borders and bodies merge into each other in what may be termed a bio-tech uncanny. He concludes with a new-beginning-of-the-world scenario which occurs because techno-capitalism and its greed take us back to the primordial in the form of the ancient warrior but now in an inter-racial context. According to Miller, the foreign and the inter-racial are the hope for the future of humanity. (PKN)

## **Writing on the Margins: Beckett Scholarship Out of the Archives**

Erika Mihálycsa

The essay gives an overview of the most important collective volumes in Beckett scholarship that have been published since the Tokyo centenary conference. Most of these volumes attempt to reposition Beckett scholarship on the changing map of literary studies and theory, as well as to re-invent a critical and theoretical discourse that could (re-)empower, instead of domesticating and exhausting, the potential of resistance in Beckettian texts. The essay gives an overview of the main directions in recent Beckett studies, starting with the unprecedented proliferation of genetic and manuscript studies, through the autobiographical turn; it addresses recent developments in studies of Beckett and philosophy or philosophy's Beckett, and, perhaps most importantly, the metamorphoses of theoretical discourse in Beckettian scholarship, from a writing of (essentially postmodern) endlessness to one of liminality and endings. Finally, it addresses the vital relationship between the text-world Beckett authored and cutting-edge contemporary theatre, media, and art, looking for examples of bringing out the potential of transgressiveness and resistance of these works instead of commodifying and petrifying them. (EM)