

Inhalt Heft 2004/3

Artikel

ISABELL KLAIBER

- “A Woman Could (Not) Do It” – Role-Play as a Strategy of ‘Feminine’ Self-Empowerment in L.M. Alcott’s “Behind a Mask,” “La Jeune,” and “A Marble Woman” 213

Abstract: Alcott’s sensational stories about actresses and female artists provide the perfect field for experiments with alternative gender roles as women of these professions do not seem to fulfill ordinary female roles in the first place. While literary scholars generally agree on the emancipating use of disguises in Alcott’s sensational fiction, the various purposes gender roles are exploited for have not yet been investigated in any detail. This essay shows that, through their subversive play with established gender categories, some of Alcott’s female characters determine their own social identities as women. Their ‘unfeminine’ deceptions of others explicitly serve their ‘feminine’ virtues and, thus, eventually help to empower these figures as ‘true women.’ In these morally hybrid and sensational female characters, Alcott expands the established repertoire of oppositional female types such as the ‘true woman’ and the *femme fatale* by introducing the alternative, more complex and individualistic gender category of a ‘feminine *femme fatale*.’

IAN ALMOND

- The Darker Islam within the American Gothic: Sufi Motifs in the Stories of H.P. Lovecraft 231

Abstract: This article has two purposes: in the first section, the socio-political place of Islam as *topos* in the stories of Lovecraft – the various Daemon-sultans, Oriental figures and Arab sages we encounter in his work – is examined, given the already extant research available on Lovecraft’s own reactionary, racist views. The article examines the possibility that Lovecraft’s dark Cthulhu gods, with their secret, subversive plan to invade our human reality, is actually a resurrection of a familiar Christian Urangst of the Terrible Turk at the gates of Vienna; this time, however, re-enacted against a background of New England, rather than Tours or Lepanto. In the second section, we consider a single tale of Lovecraft’s, “Through the Gates of the Silver Key,” from a Sufi perspective, seeing how the various references to the guide Lovecraft calls the *Umr at-tawil* can be placed and re-interpreted in the context of Islamic Mysticism.

JÜRGEN WEHRMANN

- Irish Tradition or Postdramatic Innovation? Storytelling in Contemporary Irish Plays 243

Abstract: Storytelling in Irish drama has traditionally been perceived as evidence for a continuity between Irish theatre and a pre-modern, distinctly Irish oral culture. Hans-Thies Lehmann’s theory of Postdramatic Theatre, however, allows one to describe the exhibition of the act of narration in contemporary Irish plays as a break with both Epic Theatre and the drama of the Irish Literary Revival. In contrast with the alienation effects of Epic Theatre, contemporary Irish theatre texts create intense relationships between narrator and story on the one hand and between narrator and audience on the

other. Yet the acts of narration also differ from those in the drama of the Irish Literary Revival in that oral storytelling takes the form of intimate confessions and focuses not on collective but individual memory. At the same time, the Irish example casts a critical light on some of Lehmann's concepts, particularly the avant-garde character of the so-called 'post-epic' narration and its inherent criticism of the mass media.

NORBERT H. PLATZ

Reconciling Humans with Nature through Aesthetic Experience: The Green Dimension in Australian Poetry 257

Abstract: This essay considers how the aesthetic appreciation of nature can enhance environmental bonding and caring, and contribute to engendering a reconciliation of humans with their natural environment. After a brief examination of Judith Wright's view of Australia's ecological predicament, some core constituents of the aesthetic experience of nature will be outlined to serve as a philosophical underpinning of Wright's aesthetico-ethical concept of reconciliation. Major arguments taken from her essays are meant to throw some new light not only on Wright's own poetry but on the reconciliatory character of Australian nature poetry in general. Short analyses of individual poems by John Shaw Neilson, Douglas Stewart, John Blight, Judith Wright and Ruby A. Penna focus on specific themes such as "aesthetic wealth and well-being," "translating nature into a work of art," "science-based aesthetic perception," "the symbolic reversal of human ascendancy," and "exposing ecological damage." In my conclusion, I claim that poets could take a high profile on reconciling humans with nature. Their insights need to be put on the agenda of interventionist action. My specific concern, here, is to consider how an aesthetic appreciation of nature might enhance our practice of bonding with, and caring for, the environment.

CHRISTOPH REINFANDT

'Putting Things up against Each Other': Media History and Modernization in Adam Thorpe's *Ulverton* 273

Abstract: This article examines Adam Thorpe's novel *Ulverton* (1992) as a prime example of what literature can achieve from its increasingly marginalized position in an unfolding media culture. It traces in detail how the novel combines a thematic focus on the history of the fictional village of Ulverton from the 17th century to the present with a formal staging of unfolding conditions of mediality which are in turn utilized as a medium of narrative progression. The novel's self-reflexive engagement with the interrelation between media history and modernization is based on a flexible postmodernist poetics of "putting things up against each other" which establishes the genre of fiction as a kind of 'meta-medium' for storing and communicating information as well as for processing cultural relativity.

RÜDIGER HEINZE

'History is about to crack wide open': Identity and Historiography in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* 287

Abstract: This paper suggests that beyond the overt – and abundantly discussed – concern with history, Tony Kushner's famous play *Angels in America* represents – in the phrasing of Walter Benjamin – a figurative 'shooting at the clocks' not in order to end history but to instigate new histories. The main characters, one of them modeled after the infamous historical Roy Cohn, employ different performative strategies to cope with their infection with AIDS and the impending millennium. Through constantly transfiguring their identity by subverting the names given them and the according discursive power structures, the characters 1. manage to invest the names given them with alternative/new meanings, 2. are able to maintain/obtain individual agency and 3. thus

escape the fate that an apparently pre-ordained (i.e. teleological, fixed and heteronomous) history has in store for them. Accordingly, they write their own histories in the new millennium, inverting the assumption that history determines identity by making their identity determine history. This paper will examine how this is achieved, and through which performative strategies.

Buchbesprechungen

- Henning Andersen, ed. *Actualization: Linguistic Change in Progress*
(Andreas Dufter) 301
- Marianne Flassbeck. *Gauklerin der Literatur: Elizabeth von Arnim und der weibliche Humor* *(Sabine Coelsch-Foisner)* 303
- Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*.
 Peter J. Kitson, gen. ed. *Nineteenth-Century Travels, Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Consolidation 1835-1910* *(Barbara Korte)* ... 304
- Irene Gammel, ed. *Making Avonlea: L.M. Montgomery and Popular Culture*
(Markus M. Müller) 308
- Astrid Erll, Marion Gymnich und Ansgar Nünning, eds. *Literatur, Erinnerung, Identität: Theoriekonzeptionen und Fallstudien*. *(Lars Eckstein)* 309
- Tobias Döring, Markus Heide und Susanne Mühleisen, eds. *Eating Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Food*. *(Zbigniew Bialas)* 311