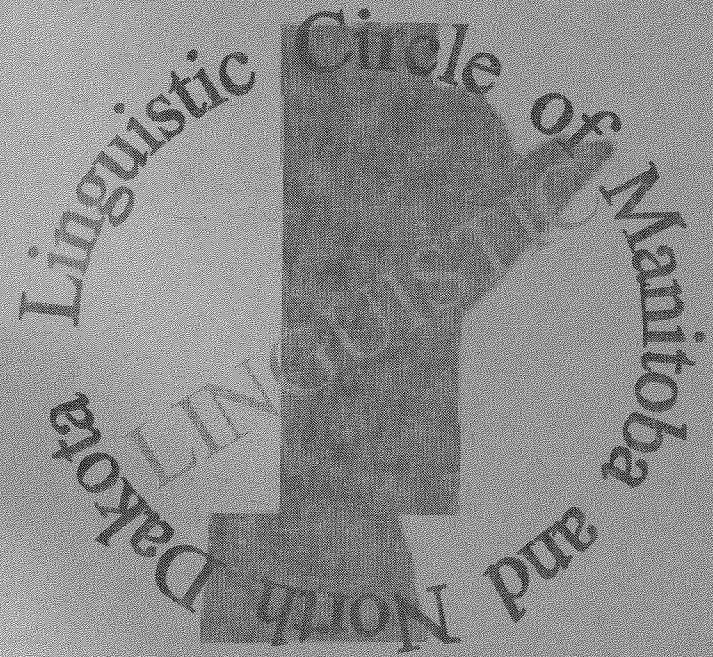


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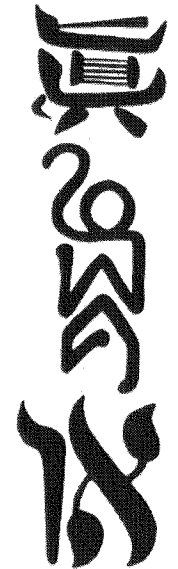
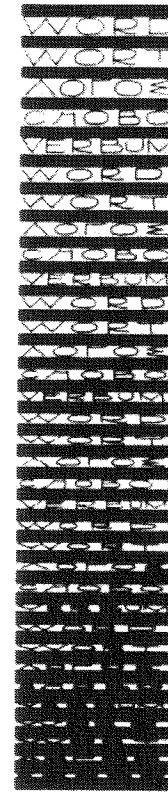
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The Queerest Sport: John Irving's Wrestling Match with Gender *Sarah Aleshire*

On the surface, John Irving's *The 158-Pound Marriage* is about, as T.S. Garp will later point out, "two married couples who have an affair." While the open marriage construction does provide an interesting basis for a sexually charged romp through the 1970s, more interesting is Irving's insistence on infusing his tale with wrestling; even the title is a direct reference to a wrestling weight class. Wrestling is, after all, a sport teeming with socially-sanctioned homosocial interactions. As such, Irving molds, for his tale, an ideal wrestling room, a "womb-like" enclosure, in which the major catalysts for the story occur. The wrestling room becomes a character itself, a queered space with gender-bending abilities in which the story's other characters interact. I posit that when physical, heterosexual interactions—namely sex—are inserted into this queered wrestling environment, the result is an inversion of the traditional gender roles, leaving feminized men and masculine women. As a result, when the characters leave the wrestling room behind to re-enter their lives, their spouses are forced to similarly acquire opposing gender roles in order to maintain a heteronormative gender balance within their relationships.

The question becomes, though, what happens when the resulting couple—a feminized man and his masculine wife—engage in an open marriage contract with a traditionally gendered couple? Following traditional "wife-swapping" procedure, the newly formed couples remain male-female, but they are not masculine-feminine, but rather homogendered: masculine-masculine and feminine-feminine. These new pairs, while presenting a fresh dynamic for all the characters involved, are accompanied by their own trappings, especially when they encounter the queer wrestling room again and again throughout the story. While their genders promote the same homosocial dynamic experienced in a wrestling match, their opposing sexes indicate that any heterosexual activities could, at any moment, cause them to revert into their traditional roles, demonstrating, again, the instability of sex and gender roles.

John Irving's works have seldom been considered with any critical basis, and *The 158-Pound Marriage*, specifically, has not even garnered a significant number of casual readers. I find this to be strange, as Irving's work seems ripe for many different critical applications, most notably, in this case, queer theory. Current scholarship in this discipline has opened the doors to arguments such as mine. William B. Turner echoes Annamarie Jagose in his book, *A Genealogy of Queer Theory*, by stating that "queer," as it is used in scholarly inquiry, is "a relatively novel term that connotes etymologically a crossing of boundaries but that refers to nothing in particular,

thus leaving the question of its denotations open to contest and revision.” Turner’s quote provided a strong, basic starting point from which I could then extend my arguments by using the ideas regarding the concept of heteronormativity in social theory, presented by Michael Warner’s book, *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. These writers steered me toward pioneers of the theory—Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick—where I established my current, and necessary, understanding of gender and the role it plays in a sexual relationship, in addition to the idea that sex and gender stimulated binaries are unstable and deconstruction becomes almost inevitable.

Minot State University

**More Than Just A Cup of Coffee: An Analysis of
“Accepting Food on the Third Offer”
in Howard Mohr’s *How to Talk Minnesotan*
Carolyn D. Baker**

A late 1950s cartoon in the United States featured two black birds with gigantic yellow beaks. Hekyl and Jekyl, as they were called, were birds of exquisite breeding and charm. Speaking with decidedly British English dialects, these fine feathered best friends conversed and treated each other with utmost politeness and consideration. One day a particularly funny and favorite segment of the long-running television cartoon portrayed the two birds attempting to go through a doorway. Because the birds were best friends they attempted to do everything together. So when both of them approached an open entrance their conversation naturally went something like this:

“After you!”

“After you!”

“After you!”

“No, I insist, after you!”

“No. No. No. This is what we will do. Instead of you going first; instead of I going first, let us both go together!”

And so they did.

And so they crashed to the floor attempting to fit doubly through a single sized entryway.

This story is more than just for the birds. It is a story which could illustrate how some human beings prize politeness during times of togetherness; the extremes to which we are willing to go to truly and meaningfully elongate our visits with significant others.

Thus, this paper deals with the phenomenon called hospitality as located in one native Minnesotan writer’s perception. It is a unique study. Howard Mohr’s perception of the region’s hospitality rituals has never had the techniques of discourse analysis applied to it; thus, a formal, academic treatment of his native perception of “Accepting Food on the Third Offer” is non-existent. Formal academic studies of this particular and perceived Minnesotan hospitality ritual are also non-existent. This was determined after one semester’s bibliographic review (Spring 2003) supplemented by an intensive one hour and half hour consultation with two of our most outstanding University of North Dakota reference librarians. Therefore, it seems safe to assume that the time of this writing, this study is the first of its kind. It is not definitive. It invites and requires further research and extensive documentation to be considered more than just an anecdotal example.

Thus, this study begins with an important emphasis: this is *a perception* of one native Minnesotan and *not the perception* of all members associated with this cultural group. It is only one building block. It is not a finished superstructure for understanding. Minnesota author and playwright’s perception of hospitality as he has observed and experienced it. It is an in depth analysis of Howard Mohr’s presentation of “Accepting Food on the Third Offer” as recorded in his book, *How to Talk Minnesotan*. After a bibliographic review, this original analysis uses Hymes’ SPEAKER grid techniques to isolate and understand native Mohr’s presentation of at least one hospitality ritual of two fictional speakers of Minnesotan dialect. Such an analysis attempts to identify and explain the paradoxical nature of hospitality offers found in Mohr’s perception of his two created, fictional, though representational speakers. It pays special attention to the discourse’s setting, acts, sequences, and ends. Seen through Mohr’s eyes hospitality is offered and enjoyed in mutually indirect ways. Hospitality is first rejected in order to be enjoyed. Accepting an offerer’s hospitality too eagerly, too quickly, jeopardizes the invitation to a mutually enjoyed time of visitation. This series of rejections and acceptances of both offerer and receiver are needed because they characterize, elongate, and make a mutually satisfying visit possible.

Thus, this is not just a story about coffee, cream, bars and sugar. It is Mohr’s story about how visits are conducted through negotiation, bantering, indirectness and politeness. Through this excerpt Mohr teaches his indirect participants the learners, that the feelings of the host are always important. The inconveniences of the host are both null and necessary. At this event, receiver rejections are expected and interpreted as acceptances. Quick acceptances are viewed negatively as greed.

This seems to be what Mohr wants his observers to learn. This seems to be what this author wishes to always remember.

Global University

**Billy Collins' *Ars Poetica*: Our Laureate's Poems
On Writing and Teaching
Ben Collins**

What makes Billy Collins's work so comfortable and relevant to us is that he is one of us. Professor of English at Lehman College of the City University of New York and at Sarah Lawrence College, he shares our daily problems with students, has insight into their problems, lives a regular non-academic life, and, like many of us, feels a need to express himself in verse or prose. Evidently he expresses himself somewhat better than most of us.

Yet, in his need to express himself and respond to his world, he, unlike many other writers, seems to have no need to hurl invectives, to resort to obscenities, to assume a political stance, or to blaspheme. Nor does he need to be opaque, to use archaisms, nor to assume an organ voice or lofty diction. And still, as I hope to demonstrate, his words can sink deep, his calm masks a creative urge which begs understanding. His pace is like A. E. Housman's, but without Housman's rhyme and sharpness or pessimism, He has been likened to Frost, but, again, without the terror that we often find in Frost. His imagination can carry him far from home without his having to leave home (see his title: *Sailing Alone Around the Room*), like Kierkegaard's walks with his father around the living room. We find that there is a "shock of recognition" as we are "surprised by joy" at discovering that Collins' seeming simplicity is not so simple at all.

Much of the work that I mean to treat in this paper may be thought of as Collins' *ars poetica*, his statement of intent, his *modus operandi*. Often he will begin in an amusing way, then lead us to a more serious conclusion. For example, though this selection is not a pan of the "poetics," in "I Chop Some Parsley While Listening to Art Blakey's Version of 'Three Blind Mice.'" Collins places himself in his kitchen chopping parsley. But as he listens, his concern for the mice takes over: how did they become blind; how in their blindness did they find each other; and how did they ever find the farmer's wife? And why would they run after her? Just to be farther handicapped by the amputation of their tails? By now, he is chopping an onion, and he is not sure whether the operation or the plight of the mice is bringing tears to his eyes.

In "Poetry," he infers that poetry differs from the other mentioned genres in that it is both easier and more relaxed (though not necessarily the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings), yet ultimately more difficult, for while it does not necessarily have to be "peopled," it does require a certain repose. "Purity" continues the creative process by setting the scene for composition and the poet's preparation for practicing his craft. To begin, the poet divests himself of his clothing (the only artificial stimulant is a pot of tea) and then removes his skin and organs in order to "purify" himself

Sometimes he leaves his penis on—then the reproductive organ and the bones suggest only the ideas of sex and death, perhaps life and death. Later, by removing his penis, his writing gets down to the "bare" essentials and confronts the "essential" theme of death.

The creative urge evidently temporarily satisfied, he rewards himself by assuming his body and by driving about and observing his world as orderly and as perfectly arranged as a sonnet.

In "Sonnet," Collins by not attempting a genuine sonnet, describes well the "traditional" sonnet—when it was basically a love poem—and tells the sonneteer, or better, has Laura tell the sonneteer, Petrarch, in this case, to "put down his pen, / take off those crazy medieval fights, / put out the lights, and come at last to bed."

In "Plight of the Troubadour," he calls attention to the fact that the poet is not always understood, though charitable persons may nonetheless nod understandingly. *Lanque doc* is not *lanque d'oil*. (*d'oc* is medieval French spoken in southern France; *d'oil* in northern France.)

"Madmen" lets it be known that a poem can be jinxed if it is discussed before it is written, just as madmen can destroy valuable works of art by slashing them. "Life is short; Art is long, is not necessarily true if inspiration takes flight too soon; just as in "Lines lost Among Trees," the poem may become ephemeral if one has no writing tools to record them.

Because poets generally address the poetically knowledgeable, it becomes obvious that Collins often alludes—sometimes subtly, sometimes not—to other poems that he feels will be known to his audience. In "Undressing Emily Dickinson," we can hear the fly buzzing, and are introduced to the ubiquitous dashes. And we observe the "nun of Amherst" gazing out of her window. The very temerity of undressing this lady—one wonders whether she ever undressed herself, and how with all of the buttons and stays, she ever dressed herself—is alarming; and yet she is humanized when she offers a sigh of relief when finally freed of her "habit."

"Monday Morning" borrows heavily from Wallace Stevens' "Sunday Morning"—it is a parody fraught with irony. The young lady in question has arrived late for her final examination, which she will undoubtedly fail. Though much in "Monday Morning" neatly parallels the first stanza of Stevens' poem, including much of the imagery, the student is not contemplating the possibilities of a hereafter or the efficacy of theology, but rather of the coming commencement exercises and their concomitant celebrations.

"Introduction to Poetry" explains how we would like our students to consider a poem, But even we (even Collins) in order to collect our salaries must fulfill out fifty minute obligations, and so we too must tie the poem to a chair and force a confession from it. This, of course, is not mentioned in the poem, but it is implicit.

In "Schoolsville," Collins muses that the number of students he has taught could populate a town, Thinking of those students, he feels that they, like Hester Prynne, will carry forever their red letter grades, and will no doubt associate with those with the same grade-point average. Their grades will be reflected in their lives and their professions. Collins, of course, will be the mayor.

"History Teacher" seems a satire on the lowering of standards, while "Death of the Allegory" demonstrates a change in the "masks" worn by the standard symbols. It might call to mind e. e. cummings' "Pity this busy monster man-unkind not."

I feel that Billy Collins well deserved his Laureateship—now replaced by Louise Gluck—and will henceforth be regarded as a major American poet.

University of North Dakota (Emeritus); Florida Atlantic University

English and Latin Anti-Proverbs in the French-Language Press

Elizabeth Dawes

Proverbs have long been parodied by adding a word or phrase (e.g. "Home, sweet **mobile** home!" (*La Presse*)) or by substituting one word or phrase for another (e.g. Time is **Monet**. (*Le Devoir*)). Such parodies are generally referred to as anti-proverbs, a term coined by the noted paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder.

This paper examines a corpus of 7 Latin and 14 English proverbs which appear in French-language newspapers and magazines both in their standard form and in a parodied form. Of the 21 proverbs, 12 are found exclusively in the source language whereas 9 are used in both French and Latin or both French and English.

When used conventionally in the francophone press, foreign-language proverbs may appear:

1. in the source language with or without a translation (e.g. Qu'advient-il du vieux dicton anglais «**There is no use to fight city hall**», ça ne sert à rien de se battre contre l'hôtel de ville»? (*Le Soleil*))
2. in "franglais" (e.g. **Le reste, comme disent les Anglais, is history**. (*Le Monde*))
3. in French in either direct or indirect speech (e.g. Un vieux dicton anglo-saxon avance même que **manger une pomme par jour éloigne le médecin**. (*La Presse*)).

Very often, the source language is identified by the journalist as is the case in the examples above.

Not all foreign-language anti-proverbs are created by the francophone journalists themselves, who may be simply quoting pre-existing parodies. Typically, these are advertising slogans such as the Laval tourist office's *The Snow Must Go On* (*La Presse*) or titles of books and films such as *A Star is Porn* (*Voir*), a film about the gay porn film industry.

When francophone journalists create their own parodies, they often use lexical means such as inversion (e.g. De time is money, nous voilà passés à **money is time**. (*Le Monde*)) or the substitution of a word or phrase for a formally similar one (e.g. The **pie** is the limit! (*La Presse*)). Parodies may be created using:

1. the source language (e.g. In **radio** veritas. (*La Presse*))
2. the French language (e.g. Un des exemples les mieux réussis: la transformation de Home Sweet Home en **Homme Sweet Homme**. (*Voir*))
3. a proper noun (e.g. A porn **Starr** is born! (*Le Devoir*) where the star in question is Kenneth Starr, prosecutor in the Monica Lewinsky scandal).

Less frequently, journalists use syntactic means, adding a clause (e.g., Less is more, d'accord, **mais more money le plus souvent**. (*Le Monde*)), modifier (e.g. A **porn** Starr is born! (*Le Devoir*)) or negation (e.g. [...] son nouvel adage est «The sky is **not** the limit». (*Le Devoir*)). Sometimes, a component of the proverb is linked to a syntactically similar word or phrase (e.g. Enfin, si l'on en croit l'étude de M. Desbiens, **ni big ni small is beautiful**. (*La Presse*)).

When journalists create such parodies using foreign-language proverbs, they risk becoming incomprehensible to unilingual francophone readers. For this reason, they usually make use of one or more of the following strategies to facilitate comprehension:

1. providing a complete or partial translation of the anti-proverb (e.g. On peut bien citer l'architecte Mies Van der Rohe en disant que «**less is more**» (moins, c'est plus), mais qu'à un certain moment, «**less is less**» (**moins, c'est moins**). (*Le Devoir*))
2. presenting both versions of bilingual proverbs (e.g. Les souverainistes doivent se souvenir du **Si vis pacem, para bellum** (**Si tu veux la paix, prépare la guerre**) des Romains et l'adapter à la situation canadienne en disant: Si vis libertas, para bellum. (*Le Droit*))
3. citing the conventional form of the anti-proverb (e.g. On a exalté la formule de Mies van der Rohe [architecte américain d'origine allemande, un des pères du Bauhaus], **less is more**; mais aujourd'hui, on constate hélas trop souvent que less is less. (*Le Monde*))

4. making reference to the fact that the proverb has been modified (e.g. En effet, dans une telle situation, «time is tissue», ajoutez-il, **paraphrasant le célèbre dicton** «time is money». (*Le Soleil*))
5. providing translations of the proverb's main lexical items in the text surrounding it (e.g. Pays des vins: In vino historia. Une **histoire** racontée sur deux continents. (*Le Devoir*)).

While journalists often take pride and pleasure in their ability to parody foreign-language proverbs, their readers tend to be rather less enthusiastic about the influx of foreign, and particularly English-language, material in French-language newspapers and magazines, as numerous letters to the editors can attest. Few would realize, however, that many of the most common French proverbs (e.g. *Mieux vaut tard que jamais* (Latin), *Aux grands maux les grands remèdes* (Greek), *Tout est bien qui finit bien* (English)) are in fact assimilated foreign-language proverbs. Indeed of the 280 parodied French proverbs that I have collected, 105 originated in another language. The few that continue to be used in the source language or in a bilingual form are merely the exceptions that confirm the rule.

University of Winnipeg

**Panel: Speaking “Bulgarian” on Slavi’s Show:
Revising Gender and Nation in the
Post-Communist Diaspora**

**Paper One: Background: Bulgaria’s History,
Political and Mass-Mediated**

*Kathleen Dixon, Anelia Dimitrova, Juliana Gencheva, Neli
Gogovska, Daniela Koleva*

Although Bulgarians look to the distant past with pride, sometimes referring to themselves as “the first Europeans” and emphasizing what is known as the First and Second Bulgarian Kingdoms (both medieval), they have spent most of what Europeans and Americans would call modern history under Ottoman rule, struggling into nationhood only in the late nineteenth century. Even then, their every effort transpired under the watchful eyes of various European powers, Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, France, Germany, and the various Balkan states or regions; indeed, no major move could be made without one or another of their (and sometimes also Turkey’s) express approval. The very size and shape of Bulgaria has expanded or contracted dependent upon the power games played by these usually imperialist entities, and also by wars Bulgaria patriotically provoked. A

nation-building period of some 60 years was abruptly halted by the Soviet Union’s occupation and creation Bulgarian Communist State after WWII. That state fell in 1989 along with the rest of the so-called Iron Curtain of Eastern Europe. It should be noted, however, that Bulgaria isn’t only Eastern European; it is also Balkan. It appears now that her entry into the European Union is secure, but its political leaders are under pressure to make a number of major changes in its economic and political institutions. In addition, the new Bulgaria labors under the watchful eyes of the heavies of the global economy, The World Trade Organization and The World Bank. As did most Eastern European countries, Bulgaria fell precipitously into the arms of capitalism, without any advance preparation. Her economy has been a “wild” one, featuring a lower standard of living for most while an elite few—including a “Bulgarian mafia” thought by some to have originated from the old Communist elite—profits.

The history of Slavi’s Show, a late-night television talk show, in a sense parallels that of the new Bulgaria itself. The broadcaster, BTV, was the first commercial station to take over the old state-owned airwaves. Earlier incarnations of Slavi’s Show actually pre-dated the fall of communism. Now, Slavi’s Show makes a signal contribution to BTV’s success. It has created a “second prime time” for late evening hours. The show is broadcast everywhere in Bulgaria even without a cable or satellite dish. Urban (70% of the population) or rural, resident of Sophia or not (for that split is as important as any other), Slavi’s Show will enter your home. Chances are, there is one TV set in the family (families are still a primary economic unit in Bulgaria), and everyone will gather round for the show. There they will see celebrity guests from the fields of politics and entertainment, Bulgarian and foreign (even some Bulgarians are “foreign,” in the sense that they have emigrated to other countries). The popularity of Slavi’s Show is mirrored by the celebrity of Slavi Trifonov himself, whose bald pate is everywhere recognized. Slavi’s Cuckoo Band has made a number of popular recordings. Trifonov’s popularity and the show’s go hand in hand; no one enjoys more popularity in Bulgaria than Slavi. Slavi’s Show is a key site for democratic discourse in the new Bulgaria.

**Paper Two: Slavi’s Show in Bulgaria’s
Transnational Communal Enterprise**

Kathleen Dixon, Aneliya Dimitrova, and Yuliyana Gencheva

It would be tempting to see Slavi’s show, a late night TV talk show created and aired in Bulgaria, as a one-man show, a promotion of the star Slavi Trifonov, who is a type of self-made man in the new capitalist Bulgaria. We do see that, but it is only small part of a perhaps contradictory whole. Slavi’s self-promotion often enough works in the interests of a larger project

of the producers of the show (including Trifonov himself, the scriptwriters and so on). That larger project seems to us to be communal in nature, and very ambitious: it is no less than the reconstructing of a Bulgarian national consciousness. Each of the episodes—five per week—is in fact an intricately fashioned piece of verbal artistry, centering upon theme of Bulgarian history and culture. Slavi enacts new roles each evening, unlike the hosts of American late-night talk shows, who generally offer only the dual role of stand-up comic and genial celebrity interviewer. In this fashion, Slavi becomes a kind of model citizen of new Bulgaria. Around this image are arrayed many other regular “characters”—again, not just the host’s sidekick and the nameless players in the band. A single guest is featured in the second half of the hour-long show, and each guest plays a part in the larger narrative of the evening’s show. Finally, both the studio and home audiences are invoked as active members of the community that is Slavi’s show. This community is Bulgarian, but it is not only Bulgarian; it is Balkan, East European, Slavic, European, global capitalist, post-Communist. We propose to argue for our thesis by means of close textual analysis of one typical episode placed within two main contexts: the specifically Bulgarian language and culture, and the larger mass mediated global culture, termed “transnational” by Arjun Appadurai.

Nationalism is currently seen as one of the major and most pervasive forces of the 20th century by contemporary theorists. Referring to the constant changes and transitions in modern states necessitated by the fast pace of capitalism and a globalizing economy, David McCrone points out that “[t]he power of nationalism in the modern world lies in its capacity to reconfigure personal identities and loyalties in a way more in tune with the social, cultural and political realities of the late twentieth century” (183). The author makes a further distinction between what Tamir terms as “thick” nationalism and a more pluralistic or “thin” nationalism. According to the former, “individuals are locked into their cultural identity” (183) and in extreme cases maintaining this paramount form of identity involves “ethnic cleansing, killing people or burning them out of their houses in the name of the tribe” (184). The second variety “does not imply that ethnic identity will have priority over other forms of social identity including those of gender and social class” (183). This postmodern understanding of nationalism suggests that it is only an option among other identity factors.

We cannot say whether the show might have accomplished something more ambitious than uniting its audience in a space of shared legacies and present attitudes. But even this phenomenon stands out on the relief of contemporary Bulgarian sentiments riddled with political skepticism. Thus, encouraging the audience to come to terms with their often embarrassing past, Slavi’s Show works against the typical national nihilism and toward a democratic consciousness through reshaping personal identities in the context of the social, cultural and political transformations of later day Bulgaria. After 1989 the coming of a capitalist economy and mentality sprang up

fresh enthusiasm in the abilities of the individual to transform his/her life and country. The following years of experimentation, stumbling ups and downs, however, revealed that sheer endeavor and good will was not enough. Moreover, the lauded individualism had bettered the luxury of a few, while leaving the majority to wonder if there was any middle class in the country and, hence, if the changes had been democratic at all. In this train of thought, whether or not the show put conscious effort in creating this collective spirit, the consequence is evident that it generates a sought after space for democratic discourse allowing for some shared political agency.

Paper Three: Slavi Trifonov and Mythic Masculinity

Kathleen Dixon, Neli Gogovska, and Daniela Koleva

As Slavi Trifonov has become simply “Slavi,” he has entered into the realm of myth. “Slavi,” as performed on Slavi’s Show, on stage and through recordings with the Cuckoo Band, and in various mass-mediated contexts, is a protean figure, part Bulgarian mafia boss, part soldier, part CEO, part body-builder, part regular guy—and so on. We perform a close reading of his numerous morphings—mainly accomplished through language and gesture—on one episode of Slavi’s Show. Around this centerpiece, we arrange other Slavi performances to get a picture of the whole: Slavi as a Bulgarian Horatio Alger, picking up the pieces of the old regime, bursting forth energetically into the new national scene that is also globally capitalized. The gender we argue, is key, for Slavi builds a new national identity for Bulgaria partly through his mythic representation of the many-sided Slavi character, and this national identity emphasizes masculinity, one that is mythic in the good sense, but also often hyper-masculine and in uneasy relation to Bulgarian women. Trifonov and his creators may be employing masculinity similarly to the way many Afro-centric men have done in the U.S., according to Hazel Carby in *Race Men*. Interestingly, however, Slavi’s Show is divided into two parts, a more masculine, joke-filled first half, and a more feminine second half featuring both informative and “inspirational” talk with guests. The mythic masculinity subsides in this feminine space. Gender is no simple matter on Slavi’s Show, as everywhere.

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Lysias' For Mantitheus

Daniel N. Erickson

Lysias wrote For Mantitheus for a young client who had to pass a scrutiny (investigation) before he could assume an office to which he had been elected, his only obstacle being a charge that he had been a cavalry officer during the despotic rule of the Thirty Tyrants in Athens. Though we do not know the outcome of the investigation, the speech clearly is persuasive. To begin with, it was written specifically for Mantitheus so as to convey his natural confidence, energetic personality, uprightness, and guiltless conscience. Further, it relies on ordinary reasoning to convince the audience of the falsity of the charge. Finally, its simple and direct style, superb organization, and brevity contribute in no small measure to the favorable impression it makes on the mind and its resulting effectiveness. In Lysias' time, good oratory was highly prized and valued both for its own sake and because it was an essential tool in law, government, and politics. Today, however, oratory has generally been replaced with techniques of Madison Avenue, which, though often impressive, have no real substance. At a time when things modern are usually considered better, we would do well to look to Lysias and other fine Greek orators for guidance in improving the current state of public speaking. Perhaps the ancients were right after all.

University of North Dakota

The Destructive Force of Desire in *La nièce de l'imam*

Sherrie M. Fleshman

The theme of desire plays an important role in Mandé Alpha Diarra's 1994 novel, *La nièce de l'imam*. Unfortunately, for the central characters, this desire is not a constructive force that influences their behaviors and interactions.

Rather, it is a destructive force that fuels the motivations and actions of the characters, leading to divorce, distancing, disinheriting, dishonor and death. In this presentation, I propose to examine the effect of the complex, uncontrollable and destructive forces of the desires of the central characters as they act and react to each other and to the limits placed on them by their societal positions and mores.

University of North Dakota

If Heav'n thou can'st not bend / Hell thou shalt move: *The Inferno* and Book Three of *The Dunciad*

Eric Furuseth

In the most influential epic poems of the Western tradition, the hero is the figure who defeats his rivals, pretends to his place in society, and survives the ordeal to show what is right in society. For example, Odysseus defeats the suitors and restored order to Ithaca as King, Æneas conquers the powerful Turnus and brings about the beginning of Rome with his marriage and proper governing abilities. On the grandest scale, seventeenth century England's Milton symbolizes especially the triumph of God over Satan. All of these works, of course, were fundamental to Alexander Pope's thinking and writing. The authors of the great heroic tales become themselves the herpes. This notion of the post hero has also become in many ways the popular tradition. For example, we have no trouble understanding William Blake crying forlornly "Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour." Pope's many comments on the great epic poets show he revered them. For this paper, I focus on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which Pope knew, but to which he does not refer in his writing except once. If Books One and Two of the *Dunciad* are most equitable, in their perverse way, to the heroic visions of Homer, Virgil, and the other great epic poets, Book Three brings to mind Dante.

We find few direct references to Dante in Pope, but he must have read the *Divine Comedy*. The best evidence I've found is in Pope's "Ages of Poetry," which includes an "Age of Dante," which strikes me as enough evidence of Pope's respect for the great Florentine to make the comparison I make here.

From the night that ends Book 2 comes the dream vision of Colley Cibber in Book 3. In this book the narration scheme is a perverted version of *The Inferno*. While in *The Inferno* the character of Dante meets the ghost of Virgil so the protagonist Cibber meets the ghost of Settle, a fellow Dance now dead. As Book 3 begins, the descent into the dream vision very specifically, if comically, recalls Dante's spiral journey down into Hell. The dunces we meet in this part of the *Dunciad* are the spirits of the dead dunces. We are rowed across the river Charon and meet several characters and several incidents, which may be credibly linked to the characters and incidents of Dante's Hell.

Monsters infest Dante's Inferno and the dream becomes Goddess Dulness's desired monstrous vision "The forests dance, the rivers upward rise, / Whales sport in woods and dolphins in the skies. Settle the ghostly guide shows all this to Cibber and all aspects of the netherworld are produced in terms that mark a new level of hellishness: "To aid our cause, If Heav'n thou can'st not bend / Hell thou shalt move, for Faustus Is our friend / Pluto

with Cato thou for this shalt join / and link the mourning Bride to Proserpine / Grubstreet thy fall should men and Gods conspire.”

Thus, these horrors of hell/heaven increase in a manner an Dante/Cibber progresses, spinning downward Into ever darker and more perverse monstrosities. This connection between Dante and Pope I have not found anywhere in the criticism of Pope.

Minot State University

Hamartia and Hubris in the Story of Oedipus

Peter Haugen

The story of Oedipus is one of the most familiar and hotly debated of the Ancient Greek myths. Frequently, an examination of those events which compose the life of Oedipus lead the examiner to address the question of whether or not Oedipus is to blame for the fulfillment of the fate decreed for him by the gods. Some argue that he is not at all to blame, for a man is not at fault for living out the fate decreed for him by the gods before his birth, especially when he has striven to avoid that very fate. However, others argue with equal passion that he is absolutely to blame; were it not for tragic flaws in his character, he would never have committed the crimes of which he is guilty.

Adherents to the latter interpretation frequently cite Aristotle's *Poetics* to defend their position; in particular, these adherents point to Aristotle's mandate that a tragic hero must suffer from some *hamartia*, which is frequently identified either as being a tragic flaw or as being the direct result of a tragic flaw. However, such an identification of *hamartia* fails to recognize both the use Aristotle makes of this word in other works (such as his *Nicomachean Ethics*) and the context surrounding this word in the *Poetics*. Aristotle himself defines *hamartia* as being mistakes committed when some material fact is not known; therefore, such actions, while horrifying, are not a source of wickedness or inherent fault within an individual. The examples of victims of *hamartia* provided by Aristotle in the *Poetics* are Oedipus (who unknowingly fulfilled the fate decreed for him by the gods) and Thyestes (who unwittingly consumed his own children). These examples reinforce the notion that a tragic flaw is not a necessary component of *hamartia*.

While it is true that *hamartia* does not require a tragic flaw, neither does a proper understanding of Aristotle's use of this word negate the possibility of a tragic flaw. In the cycle of Oedipus, the reader is confronted again and again with the *hubris* exhibited by the various characters. Laius and Jocasta in a very real sense attempt to assume a position superior to that of the gods as they strive to thwart the fate decreed for them by the gods.

Likewise, Oedipus attempts to defy his fate, struggling against the mandates of the gods. While not the direct cause of fate's fulfillment, these acts of defiance set the lives of Laius, Jocasta, and Oedipus on the paths that ultimately will lead to the very things they wish to avoid.

While not absolved of all blame, Oedipus is not nearly so guilty as many scholars have claimed. Sophocles himself makes it clear that Oedipus is not damnably polluted by his actions when he beautifully portrays the redemption of Oedipus after a life of suffering in *Oedipus at Colonus*. Both a clear understanding of Aristotle's use of *hamartia* and a careful examination of the chronicle of Oedipus are necessary to arrive at an accurate understanding of the part Oedipus himself plays in the fulfillment of his own fate; while he cannot be blamed for acts committed in ignorance, neither can he be fully absolved of guilt when his *hubris* is an indirect cause of his eventual suffering. The Oedipus myth raises a question that has been considered in philosophy and religion for centuries: Do the gods cause our fates to be fulfilled, or are they simply observers who proclaim the inevitable results of our own actions? Perhaps the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes.

University of North Dakota

“Reading” the Body: Resisting the Messages of Sexism in the *Star Trek: TOS* Episode, “Turnabout Intruder”

Jane Huenneke

Judith Fetterley asserts that “Literature is political” (xi). She means that the imbedded patriarchal bias in American literature, emanating from a climate of social and political inequality for women, has conspired to rob American women of a positive female identity. Fetterley's assertion can be extended to cover not only literary texts, but also all cultural products of American society. In this way, we can uncover the same patriarchal bias influencing and informing drama, film, music, and even television. This is particularly evident in the television series, *Star Trek: TOS*. (“Note: The subtitle, *TOS*, “*The Original Series*,” is used in *Star Trek* discourse to distinguish the first series from its subsequent “spin-offs,” *TNG*, “*The Next Generation*”; *DS9*, “*Deep Space 9*”; and *Voyager*.)

The *Star Trek* ethos professes an almost utopian society where inequalities of race and ethnicity no longer exist. And yet the underlying patriarchal bias expressed in *Star Trek* results in an overwhelmingly sexist representation of women. The episode, “Turnabout Intruder,” exemplifies this representation in a graphic and vivid portrayal of the pathology of the “female lack.” Because women have to form their identities within a patriarchal

environment that promotes their inferiority to men, they inevitably develop self-concepts in opposition to their own femaleness. This can create an identity conflict in these women which has been described in psychological terms as “female lack” or “penis envy.” This lack or envy becomes pathologic when the turmoil it produces in the female psyche causes women to actively attempt to possess what they lack, i.e., a penis, by stealing this organ of power from men.

In “Turnabout Intruder,” Dr. Janice Lester, a former lover of Captain Kirk, resents his rejection and is jealous of his successful captaincy. When they meet again, she pretends to reminisce about their former relationship while secretly plotting her revenge. When Kirk’s guard is down, Lester assaults him with a consciousness-transferring device, resulting in Lester’s personality taking over Kirk’s body, while Kirk’s mind is “trapped” in Lester’s body. As Lester performs her mind/body transfer with Kirk, she substitutes his emasculation for her own “immasculation,” resulting in a transfer of power to her female consciousness, which now resides in the empowered male body.

Patriarchy places the locus of power in the male body. To gain this power, a woman must become a man, or at least take over a man’s body. But Helene Cixous argues that women’s desire does not come from any lack and that power for women is located in their own bodies. To engage in a “resistant” reading of this *Star Trek* episode is to reject the “male-only” viewpoint, which not only equates power with the male body, but also fears the castrating woman who wishes to seize this power for her own. Drawing on the critical traditions of feminist theory and the practice of reader response criticism, I wish to argue that the patriarchal bias imbedded in this text suggests that although *Star Trek* is in many ways socially progressive, it has, nevertheless, failed to envision a society free from sexism.

North Dakota State University

The Public and Private Henry A. Boller, Nineteenth Century Traveler to the Upper Missouri

Eunice Johnston

In his autobiographical book *Not So Wild a Dream*, Eric Sevareid observes that North Dakota is “a large, rectangular blank spot in the nation’s mind.” While this was probably true when Sevareid wrote that book in 1946, a hundred years earlier the area that was to become western North Dakota was anything but a blank spot. In fact, thanks to the public’s awareness of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and the Corps of Discovery’s expedition as well as the paintings and writings of travelers such as George Catlin, the

upper Missouri River had become one of the places to visit. In 1959, a young man named Henry A. Bolter traveled up the Missouri River and later wrote about his travels. A study of his book, *Among the Indians: Four Years on the Upper Missouri, 1858-1862*, along with a comparison of this published writing with his unpublished journal and letters, offers much insight into the perspective of European-American men on the frontier and its inhabitants of it at that time in our history.

Born in Philadelphia in 1836, Boller attended the University of Pennsylvania but dropped out before graduating. In 1858, his desire to see the West lead him to seek employment in the fur trade, and he obtained a position with Clark, Primeau and Company, an “opposition” trading firm that was in competition with the dominant American Fur Company. He journeyed up the Missouri River by steamboat and spent the next two years as a clerk at Fort Atkinson, Clark, Primeau and Company’s trading post, which was located on one other side, of a Mandan-Hidatsa village, while Fort Berthold, owned by the American Fur Company, was located on the other. Boller the story of his adventures in 1867, shortly after the Minnesota Indian War of 1862. At a time when “the Indian is being held up before the world as an incarnate fiend,” Boller comments that “it is but fair that his redeeming qualities should likewise be recorded.

When Boller traveled up the Missouri River to the Fort Berthold area, he already knew about the Mandans and the Hidatsas because of Catlin’s work: “The walls of his playroom were ornamented with drawings of Indians he had made, guided by one of George Catlin’s books, and he recruited his own band of Indians from among the boys in the neighborhood. However, his desire to travel to the frontier seems to have been motivated by a desire to seek an authentic experience, one free from mediation: “For years it had been a cherished project to penetrate the heart of the wilderness and see the Indians as they really were.” Some descriptions of his experiences indicate that he found authenticity; for example, the first night he is attacked repeatedly by bedbugs and he writes, “I began to think that the romance of Indian life was one thing but its reality another.” However, his book he frequently uses theatrical metaphors, which suggests that he sees this experience as play into which he has stepped.

Boller’s perspective of Mandan and Hidatsa men seems to have been influenced by the “noble savage” model: they are honorable albeit primitive and savage men. However, frequently the narratives he presents are comedies with the native men as the source of the humor. His description of Mandan and Hidatsa women, however, is more disconcerting. Although he provides his readers with the men’s Mandan and Hidatsa names as well as the English translations, he does not provide the names of any of the Mandan or Hidatsa women he encounters—even though his letters and journal indicate he does know those names. The women are “extras,” characters whose names we do not know, or they are “props” that belong to the men. Even though Boller

claims that he is representing the “redeeming qualities” of the natives, comparisons between his published and unpublished writing clearly shows that he is adapting his depiction of Native Americans to the perceptions of the American public in the late 1860s.

North Dakota State University

**When a Good Raft and Compass Won't Do:
Ezra Pound's Reliance in *The Cantos* on *Guan yin*, Chinese
Patron-Goddess of Those Who Travel By Sea**

Robert Kibler

Ezra Pound's *Cantos* are at one and the same time a narrative exploration of time, space, and human understanding. His most enduring poetic mask—or *persona*—throughout the long poem is that of Odysseus. The Odyssean Pound encounters the goddess Circe in the opening *Cantos*, is later fitted by her with a good raft that is swamped off the coast, and is always dependent on the old Greek navigational method of traveling “in periplus” [*periplous*] to get around. That is, both Pound the poet, and his Odyssean *persona* within the poem navigate by touching base with recognizable features of metaphoric landscape, only to then move out into unknown seas while keeping some relationship to that landscape. The results are as varied as are the subjects and themes of the *Cantos*, but inevitably, our travelers run into troubles of all kinds. When this happens, Pound calls upon *Guan yin*, or *Kuonon*. As in the beginning *ur-Cantos*, where she appears as a stable force, so too in moments of extreme crisis throughout the poem, *Guan-yin*, Chinese Goddess of Mercy, and patron-Goddess of those who travel by sea, comes to dominate the situation.

In this presentation, I will outline the mythological role of *Guan yin* overall, and in relation to water, and then identify those moments in the *Cantos* where she appears, and to what effect. Doing so will allow us to see the *Cantos* as a fluent spiritual journey wherein a very special kind of divine intervention becomes persistently necessary to keep the Odyssean traveler Pound and his long poem afloat.

Minot State University

Carmen Boulosa's *Heretical Theater*

Juli A. Kroll

“Imagine that someone, not for pedagogic reasons this time, but moved rather by other political goals, or by a perverse desire for entertainment, rouses these prisoners, who have been freed of their chains at the very moment that the philosopher, still a little lost in his idealities, has sat down among them, at his old place. Don't you think that if they 'catch the offender, they would put him to death.' All that remains to be known is whether what they caught was not already dead” (Luce Irigaray, “Plato's *Hystera*”)

Popular Mexican author Carmen Boulosa's 1985 play, *Aura y las once mil vírgenes* (*Aura and the Eleven Thousand Virgins*) from the collection *Teatro herético* (*Heretical Theater*), uses a postmodern style fusing high and low culture and Old and New World forms in order to enact a progressive social critique. The play challenges hetero-normative femininity and capitalism by employing the tragicomic premise of a failed advertising executive who must “deflower” virgins in exchange for creative and economic potency.

Scholarship on the two major plays of *Teatro herético* (*Aura* and *Cocinar hombres*) credits them with combining postmodernism and feminism toward affirmations of womanhood outside of patriarchal mandates and binary hierarchies, respectively (Costantino, Wehling); Roselyn Costantino convincingly reads *Aura*'s employment of multiple media and self-reflexive devices as postmodern, and she reads the advertising executive's obsessive deflowering of virgins as allowing for a feminist deconstruction of marketing slogans and images that objectify and fetishize an idealized female form. While extant scholarship on *Aura* recognizes its condemnation of postmodern-era machismo and of capitalist incursions onto the female body (Costantino), it is important to recognize that the ironic effacement of identities played out in “*Aura*” is deeply embedded in a rejection of conservative Western and Catholic narratives of womanhood, a fact to which Costantino alludes. However, deeper understanding of Boulosa's theatrical production demands rereading *Aura*'s social critique with attention to the work's sustained conceptualization that capitalism and Christianity—especially Catholicism—are complementary Western narratives. To this end, is especially constructive to study mass media advertising's fetishistic portrayal of the female body as shown in *Aura* via Luce Irigaray's linking of the rise of Western cultures to the formative moment of the death of the Mother (“Plato's *Hystera*”). This formative moment hides a matricidal impulse that underlies the Western Catholic religious narrative and which is revealed in *Aura*'s plot.

Irigaray's notion that Western culture is predicated on the murder (death) of the mother suggests an oedipal narrative that is in turn upheld in the image of the Catholic Virgin as the impossible mother of Christ, the very first new millennium man. The virgin is a mother "murdered" via the denial of her sexuality—the very capacity that facilitates creation and mortality of the human species and that makes women both impregnable and mothers. The denial of the mother's blood's capacity to convey sexuality—despite the fact that her mortality is retained—is carried out through the law of the father as espoused in the son—the product of filial engendering in the image of the father. This familial sadism—the concept that patriarchal creation depends upon a passive feminine vehicle that is denied subjectivity—has as its counterparts both the punishing mother / creator or enchantress, such as Coatlicue and Medea, and the victimized, sacrificed girl. In Mexican tradition, these are the daughters of "hembrismo," the cultural code of feminine piety, purity and obedience. In *Aura*, these "daughters," who in some ways resemble the female characters of Boullosa's late-1980s novels *Antes (Before)* and *Mejor desaparece (Better to Disappear)*, are both subjected to patriarchal mandates and ironically rescued, even as the audience is made aware of the social mechanisms that configure the women's subjectedness.

University of North Dakota

Trois comédies contre les puissants

André Lebugle

Nos vies et les règles qui les gouvernent sont souvent entre les mains de certains groupes de la société qui, par leurs fonctions et leur savoir, ont une influence et des droits dont est privé le commun des mortels. Dans un monde parfait, ces puissants n'abuseraient pas de leur pouvoir et l'exerceraient sagement, mais la perfection n'étant pas monnaie courante sur notre planète, nous sommes donc souvent à leur merci, bien qu'eux-mêmes refusent généralement la responsabilité de leurs actions. Pour illustrer cette situation, j'ai choisi trois comédies du vingtième siècle. La première, écrite en 1922, est *Knock* de Jules Romains. Elle s'attaque aux médecins et est la plus célèbre des trois. La seconde a pour cible les magistrats et est due à la plume de Marcel Aymé. Il s'agit de *La Tête des autres*, qui date de 1952. Quant à la troisième, elle a été écrite en 1951 par Boris Vian. C'est *Le Goûter des Généraux*, et elle vise le haut commandement de l'armée. Je me propose d'étudier comment les auteurs se moquent de leur cible et en dénoncent les excès.

University of North Dakota

"I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you": Pseudo-Sadomasochism and Erotic Misery in Whitman

Christopher Lozensky

Walt Whitman was not a self-identified sadomasochist—but he probably *should* have been one. His 1856 "Poem of Procreation," retitled "A Woman Waits for Me" in 1867, features elements of sexual sadomasochism (S/M), a subversive performance of human sexuality that has been shown to provide some individuals with intense sexual pleasure and authentic interpersonal intimacy. As Pat Califia has put it, sadomasochism is the "quintessence of non-reproductive sex." By extension, S/M eroticism is also the quintessence of non-reductive sex, as performing sadomasochism has been known to liquidate the boundaries surrounding traditionally sex-defined gender roles to the point that sadomasochistic relationships become completely egalitarian. The decidedly non-procreative potential of S/M eroticism is crucial to its egalitarian appeal. Prevalent Victorian sexual ideologies stipulate that heteronormative male-female procreative sexual intercourse require vaginal penetration culminating in male ejaculation into the female vagina. This model of procreative sex perpetuates Victorian gender stereotypes in which men are active, ardent inseminators, while women are passive, passionless receptacles. When mutual pleasure replaces compulsory reproduction as the ultimate goal of the staged sadomasochistic fantasy scenario, gender roles become more fluid, providing individuals with ways to express their human sexual desires outside of culturally prescribed normative modes of behavior.

Sadomasochistic eroticism was not unknown to people living in Victorian America. Though a considerable body of scholarship addressing sadomasochism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature and history is presently available, no in-depth study of S/M, as it pertains to Walt Whitman or his *Leaves of Grass* has been completed. Whitman uses a poetic persona in his writing, and in the case of "A Woman Waits for Me," that persona is too aggressive and not daring enough to fully embrace S/M eroticism and express it to its utmost egalitarian potential. Instead of experiencing authentic sadomasochism and the beneficial and pleasurable alternatives it can provide, characters in "A Woman Waits for Me" experience pseudo-sadomasochism—behaviors, actions, attitudes, and situations that resemble the early depictions of S/M eroticism found in the fictional writings of the Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, but are only "pseudo" sadomasochistic because they foster the kinds of oppressive and repressive structures authentic sadomasochism seeks to subvert. In "A Woman Waits for Me," pseudo-sadomasochism leads to the formation of impersonal relationships and reaffirms ideological inequalities of sex and gender. These dysfunctional characteristics of pseudo-sadomasochism, which ultimately keep individuals from experiencing sexual pleasure, are embraced under the

umbrella term “erotic misery”—a phrase I have loosely adapted from *Die Kathedrale des erotischen Elends (The Cathedral of Erotic Misery)* or *Merzbau*, the title of a famous twentieth-century artwork by German artist Kurt Schwitters.

While it may be said that “A Woman Waits for Me” references stereotypical Victorian views of female and male sexual experience, these basic notions (i.e., that normative vaginal intercourse is painful and displeasing for women who do not—or should not—have sexual desires in the first place, and that a woman should lie still during sex so that her male partner does not injure himself by expelling too much of his vital semen) are exaggerated to pseudo-sadomasochistic extremes. The male persona silences women, and tellingly places them under him in a gender hierarchy that contradicts the aims of authentic egalitarian S/M eroticism. As passive and powerless vessels, the women in the poem cannot be fully masochistic, while Whitman’s alarmingly masculine male persona is simultaneously overly *and* insufficiently sadistic. “A Woman Waits for Me” portrays eroticism that is not only “heterosexual,” but distinctly procreative. Though Whitman in many ways undermines the Victorian ideal of chaste “heterosexuality” between husband and wife, he compromises the benevolence of his own subversive approach to male-female relationships by over-emphasizing the procreative aspects of heteronormative sexual contact. Recalling Califia’s notion that S/M eroticism is the “quintessence of nonreproductive sex,” it may be argued that Victorian ideologies of male-female reproductive sex are important factors in why potentially sadomasochistic relationships go unrealized in Whitman’s poem.

Procreation is paradoxical: it guarantees the union of male and female bodies in heteronormative vaginal intercourse, but it also leaves males and females locked in rigid re(produ)ctive roles which, though in accordance with normative stereotypes of Victorian sex and gender ideology, turn functional sadomasochism in dysfunctional pseudo-sadomasochism by strengthening the boundaries between masculinity and femininity, and perpetuating the inequalities attendant to these narrowly-defined gender positions. Like a pseudo-sadist, Whitman’s persona is too involved in his performance and is not empathetic too, or even aware of, his female partner’s emotional needs and sexual desires. He acknowledges that performing his masculine inseminating role will inflict physical pain upon his partner, but does not consider if his harsh advances will lead to the woman’s attainment of sexual pleasure. Instead of receiving pleasure as a masochist would, the waiting woman is portrayed as a pseudo-masochist, and therefore she cannot experience sexual pleasure, only erotic misery—unpleasurable sexual suffering that can only be rewarded with emotional dissatisfaction and the even greater physical pains of childbirth. Moreover, the male persona is so physically and emotionally aggressive and brutal, that his treatment of his female partner suggests a kind of pseudo-rape. An authentic sadist needs the

consent of a willing masochist. In Whitman’s poem, however, a single narcissistic man seeks to impregnate innumerable women, who may not be willing participants in the process. As such, neither the male persona nor his many female partners are fully sadistic or masochistic in the way people involved in authentic sadomasochistic relationships would be. What the poem provides, instead, is a portrait of unwanted sexual violence and pseudo-sadomasochism.

The heteronormative relationships presented in “A Woman Waits for Me” contradict the aims of authentic S/M eroticism as it is celebrated today, and could have been enjoyed in Whitman’s own time. Instead of performing sadomasochism in ways that allow people to experience interpersonal intimacy, gender equality, and sexual pleasure, characters in “A Woman Waits for Me” enact pseudo-sadomasochistic situations that produce impersonal relationships, gender inequalities, and erotic misery. Though the pseudo-sadomasochistic elements in Whitman’s writing has gone largely unexamined in recent scholarship, my own attempt to fill in this critical gap would not be possible without the fine insights that have been presented by some of the leading experts in Whitman criticism. In consideration of the inevitable constraints imposed by limits to length and time, I have not addressed the sadomasochistic possibilities of Whitman’s personal life in this essay.

Minot State University

**A Woman’s Response to Violence In Louise Erdrich’s
The Master Butchers Singing Club
Tom Matchie**

Perhaps, given 9-11 and “Operation Iraqi Freedom,” and the continued suicide bombing in the Middle East, it is not too to say that we live in a time of violence. For some the answer is to fight violence with violence. For others, the roots of violence like deeper, and might even be found next door, in one’s own family or community relationships. If that is true, the better response might be to first deal with the evil in our midst, along with the pain it involves, in which case we might be better prepared to face it around the globe, rather than blaming others and immediately going on the attack. In *The Master Butchers Singing Club*, published just prior to the Iraqi War, Louise Erdrich attempts to examine the roots and meaning of violence in both narrow and wide perspectives, as though the two were indigenously related. Says critic Karen Weeks of the novel:

Murderers could be a best friend or fellow tenor, not just a trained

soldier. Everyone has the capacity both to inflict and to survive great pain.

As in her other works, Erdrich's characters reveal surprising depths when faced with suffering and death.

But there is another level to the enigma that underpins the urge to kill, one that is related to gender. Could it be the violence is mainly a masculine thing? Without oversimplifying the dilemma, Erdrich in a rather complex narrative attempts to examine the role of sex in relation to physical violence and death, even as they occur in global war, and effect these killings have on individuals as well as whole human family.

North Dakota State University

The "Ars Poetica" of the *Avant-Garde*: Vicente Huidobro and Pablo Neruda

Debra Maury

While Vicente Huidobro is best known as the father of the theory of Hispanic avant-garde poetics known as "creacionismo," Pablo Neruda's poetics have rather consistently yet somewhat dubiously been designated as Surrealism. Huidobro once denied ever having referred to his poetics as a school and was involved in every polemic on poetics from Modernism to Surrealism. Moreover, Neruda's style of writing changed often over the years, reflecting the experiences of his personal life as well as his varied and moot current aesthetic and political inclinations.

To abridge the aesthetic caste of these most salient members of "la vanguardia hispanica" of the twentieth century as "creacionista" and Surrealist, respectively, is an oversimplification that disregards the very essence of the *Avant-Garde* itself, that of constant evolution.

This presentation will examine both poetic and prose texts by these two authors. Huidobro's poem, "Arte poetica," will be examined as the poetic expression of core "creacionista" principles while some looser known prose works will offer clear evidence of Huidobro's many postures and consistent interest in the art of theory. An analysis of Neruda's relatively cryptic poem, "Arte poetica," will also be juxtaposed with his prose text, "Sobre una poesia sin pureza," along with selections from other poem which serve to discern a chronology of his aesthetic throughout his career.

University of North Dakota

Previous Logics: Prescient or Passé?

Theodore Messenger

Since the days of Aristotle and the Stoics, logic has concerned testing propositions as to their truth. One proposition might follow validly from others, but one or more of those others might be false. On its own, a proposition might be necessarily true (p or not-p)—a tautology. It might be necessarily false (p and not-p)—a contradiction. Or it might require external evidence—a contingent proposition; e.g.: "A stick is standing in the corner." In practice, an obvious falsehood might be substituted for a contradiction; e.g.: "Socrates was a fool."

A disjunction (p or q) is true if either disjunct is true. In medieval logic "Socrates was a fool or a stick is standing in the corner." was considered contingent.

Aristotelian logic involves universal propositions such as "All squares are quadrangles." This universal affirmative proposition might be symbolized "S a Q," but it could also be symbolized "Asq."

In 1987, a "World Congress on Logic, Methodology and the Philosophy of Science" met at Moscow State University. At one of the sessions, all of the foregoing themes converged somewhat spectacularly.

University of North Dakota

Women poets of the Restoration: A Spark From 1789 to 1830

Joseph Nnadi

Despite sustained efforts by researchers to rehabilitate 19th-Century French women writers, the contribution of the latter to the literary and political life of their times is yet to be fully appreciated. This is all the more so for the Restoration period and, in particular, for the poetic genre. For, while Mme de Staël is recognized as one of the theoreticians of French Romanticism, of her female contemporaries only Marceline Desbordes-Valmore has so far been canonized (albeit belatedly and perhaps grudgingly by some) as a "Romantic poet." On the other hand, Romantic poetry in general is considered as devoid of political content. It would take the upheavals of 1848 and the Coup d'Etat of 1852 to inspire Victor Hugo's political diatribe against Napoleon III in *Les Châtiments*. Hence, the existence of women Romantics is little recognized, and much less their role in fanning the embers of the revolutionary spirit into the flames that would chase Charles X from the throne.

This paper proposes to examine the extent of political revolt and social subversion in the poetry of four upper-class women: Mme de Stael, Mme (La Princesse) de Salm-Dyck, Mme Amable Tastu and Mme de Girardin. Although little emphasized, this literature, alongside the social awakening of the Fourierist movement, formed the hotbed of the "Révolution de Juillet".

By comparing their literary work with the social activism of Mme Roland and Olympe de Gouges before them and of Pauline Roland, their contemporary, the paper presents these poets as the intellectual between the two Revolutions of 1789 and 1830. In their own way, these women were the intellectual forerunners of the latter Revolution as the 18th-Century "philosophes" were of the former.

The focus on the four women poets is central to the paper. But a study of the feminine poetic voice of the period would be complete without reference to the works of writers of less noble birth, or less noble marriage, like Mélanie Waldor, Clara Francia-Mollard and Elisa Mercoeur. By association with pre-89 and contemporary activists, these poets earn themselves a right of place in the ranks of early avant-garde women intellectuals, whose agenda was indeed "feminist" even before "feminism" was known.

University of Winnipeg

Reconstructing Female Identity in *The Bell Jar*

KrisAnn Norby

Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* exemplifies the fragmentation of identity many feminist theorists note as a common occurrence among women who long for independence yet feel trapped in roles predefined for them by a patriarchal society. Plath's heroine, Esther, (undoubtedly Plath's younger self), contains all of the fragmented characteristics theorists Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar note among self-divided artists who have the desire "both to accept the structures of patriarchal society and to reject them" (78). Esther had always dreamed of having a family, but also of leading a successful career—her fragmentation arrives when society urges her to choose between these two dreams and ultimately define a new identity.

When trying to mend her fragmentation and acquire a fused identity, Esther engages in double figure shadowing which allows her to examine personality traits she can relate to in other females. Many critics, such as Jeremy Hawthorn, note how double figures allow a heroine to mirror another character's identity in an attempt to assume an identity that the heroine, herself, can be satisfied with. Esther shadows both "angelic" and "monstrous" characters because she has noticed how well these double figures have been

assimilated into society. However, as Esther tries to completely absorb the characteristics of each double figure, she becomes disappointed because none allow her to express all of her inherent traits and longings. Additionally, she disagrees with the subservience of the angelic doubles, but she also opposes the sexlessness of monstrous doubles. This dissatisfaction with double figures not only prolongs her internal fragmentation, but she also begins to view her external appearance as disjointed. Because Esther explores identities of double figures that are not reflections of her true character, Esther's mirror image appears distorted, fragmented, and foreign. Several mirror scenes indicate that exploring double figures will not bring Esther a satisfying identity, nor will it heal her fragmentation.

I argue that in order to find a true identity that mends her internal and external fragmentation, Esther must discard all double figures and accept she will never be a true "angel," completely subservient in domesticity, nor a real "monster," totally independent without any feminine qualities. When Esther *totally* rejects the final double figure in the novel and admits double figure shadowing will never heal her fragmentation, she moves toward a realistic identity of compromise. She chooses to have freedom in her life, and, regardless of society's expectations, be exactly who she has been all along—a mixture between angel and monster. This allows Esther to demonstrate she will be sexual without being subservient, but she will be independent without sacrificing her sexuality. Because Esther finally asserts an independent identity true to her own desires, her fragmentation begins to heal, and she is finally able to reflect, "I [am] my own woman" (Plath 182).

North Dakota State University

Feminist Voice in Narrative Inquiry

Jaqueline McLeod Rogers

Different conditions underlie the feminist and postmodernist turns to a narrative research methodology. Given and read as approximating tale rather than ineluctable truth, a postmodern knowledge narrative can be understood as a reaction against the conventions of modernism and the expectations of realism. In contrast, women writers and feminist scholars gravitate more pro-actively toward narrative expression as a form suited to conveying personal-voice experience-based observations.

In reflections written in the late eighties and early nineties on using (and choosing) narrative discourse, several women scholars provide reasons ranging from personal, to rhetorical and political. For example, staking claims on mainly personal grounds, some say that they feel more comfortable using personal voice and the realm of experience to explore life and ideas.

Citing rhetorical reasons, some emphasize that narrative provides an alternative to tradition-bound, theory-based, single-minded, thesis-driven, objective-sounding argument; they want a form of scholarship that treats experience seriously and accommodates diversity of views and the dynamic nature of knowing. These writers are politically motivated, in the sense that they want something other than predominant thinking and writing practices. This tradition of feminist narrative scholarship did not develop seamlessly, however, emerging instead as a result of rather self-conscious risk taking on the part of writers who expressed the hope of finding something better than current practice.

To sum up, looking at the recent history of feminist narrative scholarship brings several points into relief. First, it has its own tradition, distinct from that of post-modern narrative. A corollary point is that while women have undertaken narrative scholarship as an alternative to traditional forms of scholarship, they have also pursued it for more positive, proactive reasons, cultivating this voice with purposes ranging from personal to political and rhetorical. And finally, while narrative patterns are currently understood as part of the fabric of women's writing, when this voice began to be heard thirty years ago, its tone was more self-conscious and halting.

University of Winnipeg

That "Most Dangerous Instrument": On Tongues & Windows

Michelle M. Sauer

The central idea of the lesbian void involves not simply secrecy, but also invisibility. This idea is an intriguing one in relation to anchoritism. In theory, this devotion demanded total isolation and complete solitude. In practice, however, every rule for recluses provided for the existence of at least one female servant. These servants were at least partially enclosed. The day-to-day contact with the outside world, the purchase of necessities, and the general upkeep of the household fell to them. However, the servants were also expected to pray, to teach and be taught, and many inherited their mistress' cell.

The anchoritic cell, which these servants shared with their mistress, provided something that the majority of medieval households did not have—a private space. Moreover, this space was specifically female, specifically female-controlled, and specifically eroticized. Rules define practices involving windows, speech, and sight that regulate both sexuality and spirituality, but in regulating heterosexual urges, desire is redirected towards homoeroticism.

The nature of the relationships between anchoresses and their servants has not yet been explored. The two women— anchoress and servant—created

an interior society, presumably one in which class rules, and perhaps sexual rules, were somewhat suspended. How does the potential contained by this space relate to sanctity? My paper will explore not only this new, alternate society, but also the interactions between its members and their relationship to the larger community.

Minot State University

The Ontological Problem of Autogenesis in

Jean-Paul Sartre's *Huis Clos*

Vincent Schonberger

Paul Sartre is primarily known as a philosopher. And yet, when we examine his literary works, it is difficult to distinguish Sartre the artist from Sartre the philosopher for his literary writings are centered around existential problems. Both his fiction and his theater are anchored to the all-important metaphysical question, What is man?—What am I? Sartre's existentialist answer to this fundamental ontological question is that a man is what he does and how he "looks," nothing more. For Sartre man's existence precedes his essence. The life of an individual is the sum of his desires, performed in the presence of others. According to Sartre, our being is never stable; it can never be identified with its past, present or future. Consciousness can only be defined as a radical opposition to the being of things which is solid, static, self-identical. The being of things is "en soi" that is to say, pure positivity, plenitude, objectivity. Consciousness is "pour soi," it is not "soi," yet it always tries to be "soi." The freedom of the "pour soi" and the identity of the "en soi" are mutually exclusive. A synthesized union of an "en soi pour soi" of an objective static self and that of an ever becoming freely changing self is incompatible. One may be an object for others, but one can never be an object for oneself, for the concept of a fixed, objective, petrified self would entail la mort de la conscience. The permanent structures of an objectified and consolidated personality would prevent one from any freedom of choice, from any spontaneous action, from any possibility of potential change or becoming. The desire for a psychological homeostatic, unchanging character would lead to the refusal of one's self-constitution. Unfortunately, most people spend their lives in a futile attempt to flee their existential freedom and to achieve a form of static existence, an impossible state of self-confidence. Such a struggle for self-identification is a futile attempt, "une passion inutile," for self-confidence is possible only after death, only in a state of static totalized form which constitutes a definite form of alienation to others. Unlike other Marxist philosophers, Sartre is not satisfied to define

man as matter that happens to be conscious. For Sartre, man is different from the objective universe. He is matter that chooses to exist. A stone is, but man exists only as insofar as he declares himself responsible for his actions. The difference is that a man is responsible for what he does and for the image that his acts reveal. This responsibility is painful for the freedom of selecting a course of action creates anguish and anxiety. What Sartre attempts to explore in *Huis Clos* is the paradoxical, dialectic and somewhat pessimistic nature of our phenomenological ontology: that is, the inescapable nature of our freedom of choice and our passionate and relentless search for self-identity. He is trying to demonstrate through his dramatis personae that Garcin, Ines, and Estelle are not a coward, a lesbian, or a nymphomaniac the same way as they are male or female, blond, brunette, or redhead. They chose to be the way they are, because they were afraid of their freedom of choice and of change, because they longed to be as solid as a thing in their socially acceptable petrified images. In their struggle for a static identity, they were striving to be something, an "en soi," in the manner in which a table or a rock are something. They tried to find their "pour soi" by becoming "en soi" while remaining "pour soi" and thereby to attain the justification of their being. Escapism and self-deception had become their second nature. In their relentless struggle to be something solid, something static, they have abdicated their freedom to become. Living a life of self-deception, they have each surrendered their freedom of choosing life. Ines has accepted the fact that she was born with a certain nature, a perverse woman, that all was arranged for her in advance, without any of her doing. Estelle had accepted and played the role of the vain, sensitive, selfish, self-sacrificing victim who gave up her own happiness and married a rich old man in order to save the life of a sick brother. The most tragic of the three is Garcin, an idealist and a coward, who uses his intellect to reason away his responsibilities in order to rationalize his actions or inactions. But as Sartre postulates in *Huis Clos*, there are no acceptable excuses, no universal types or general categories, no universal human nature. There is no determinism and our actions cannot be justified by our environment, by by our past. It is not self-justification, not reasoning, not, play-acting, for they dehumanize the individual by blinding him to his own freedom, but personally chosen action and metaphysical responsibility that make man the creator of his essence.

Lakehead University

Filling in the Gaps: Jacques Maritain and the Esthetics of Modernism

George Slanger

Modernism—defined here as the literary movement that dominated Anglo-American literature between the wars—was, for a generation of teachers who began serious reading in the 1950's (including myself), a calling, a passion, and a way of life. For us, the works of Stevens, Woolf, Eliot, Joyce, Pound, Lawrence, were sacred texts to be recited, pondered, and revered, even before they were understood. We saw Modernism as a noble, even heroic effort to reconstitute a culture that had grown moribund and whose corruption stood starkly revealed by the horrors of the First World War. In "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly," Pound called this culture "An old bitch gone in the teeth," but Pound also defended his generation's efforts to redeem that culture by esthetic effort. As he put it in Canto 81 (written from prison in Italy):

To have done instead of not doing/ This is not vanity
To have with decency knocked/ That blunt might open
To have gathered from the air a live tradition
or from a fine old eye the unconquered flame / This is not vanity

Modernism as we learned it in graduate schools in the sixties and seventies, was characterized by a thoroughgoing estheticism, resonant with, though not necessarily derived from Romantic notions of the artist, Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, and Nietzsche's rhapsodic undermining of objective truth. This estheticism focused on the art object as an "autonomous object" or, as Wimsatt called it a "verbal icon." It was to be understood as the interplay of forces in irony, tension and paradox, successful as it produced unity in complexity. Matters of biography, authorial intent, morality, mimesis, the reader's response, even emotion, were pushed into the background, or even labeled as heresies.

Like any system, Modernism could not do everything. Two deficiencies in particular stand out and are treated here: First, modernism was non-philosophical, if not anti-philosophical. With some exceptions, Modernist poets and critics eschewed speculation about the ontological status of the literary object. Second, it was not helpful in understanding the process by which literary art comes to be. Thus the Modernist artifacts—dense, referential, and lyric—took on a Himalayan nature. They were things to be contemplated from afar, rather than things which might encourage emulation.

But one philosopher/critic wrote steadily through the heyday of Modernism—the twenties, thirties, and forties and fifties—offering an esthetic that was thoroughly consistent with modernism but also providing an ontological grounding for art and a coherent analysis of the creative process—the two deficiencies that I identified. That man was Jacques Maritain,

a French philosopher, who was born in 1882 and died in 1978. In 1904, he and his wife, Raissa, met as students in Paris. They were so serious about ideas that they made a pact to commit suicide in one year if they had not discovered a meaning for life and existence. Through the lectures of Bergson and the influence of an obscure writer named Leon Bloy, they found their way to Roman Catholicism. Maritain read his way through the works of Thomas Aquinas (about the time Joyce would have been reading him) and devoted the rest of his life to applying the principles of Thomist philosophy to contemporary problems in metaphysics, art, and ethics. In the case of modern art, he did this especially in *The Situation of Poetry* (written with Raissa, in French, in 1948) and *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, written in English in 1953.

Maritain's key distinction is between art and poetry. Poetry, he writes, "is a process more general and more primary . . . a kind of divination . . . the secret life of each and all of the arts, another name for what Plato called *mouiske*." It is unique kind of human activity. It tends naturally to produce a work of art, but it operates before it does so. Those operations can be described, and Maritain does so, in a kind of mystical/analytic language, unique—so far as I know—in modernist esthetics. Like any mental capacity, it can be perverted, and has been, particularly in Surrealism.

Art itself, as it issues from Poetry, Maritain assigns to the Thomist/Aristotelian category of the practical intellect, as distinguished from the speculative intellect. But the practical intellect can be subdivided into moral and artistic activity. Art, in this analysis, is a virtue, but an artistic virtue, not a moral one. As an artistic virtue it has its own realm, ultimately connected to the deep unity of thought but with a large measure of autonomy. This autonomy is entirely consistent with Modernism and justifies my argument that Maritain is a modernist, but one uniquely capable of setting Modernism in a larger philosophical and psychological context. For both Modernism and Maritain, the moral virtue of the artist is irrelevant to the artistic virtue of the art. As Maritain says: "Oscar Wilde was but a good Thomist when he wrote, 'The fact of a man's being a poisoner is nothing against his prose.'"

Maritain's distinction between Poetry and Art also leads him to insights that bear on the other "deficiency" in the Modernist enterprise—its failure to do justice to the process by which poems come to be. Poetry gives rise to art, but before it does, it gives rise to something Maritain calls "poetic knowledge: 'the secret vital virtue of the spiritual germ that ancients called the idea of the work.'" It exists as a tendency, a drive, a human activity—whether or not it actually produces a work of art. As Maritain puts it, "one may be a poet without producing—without having yet produced—any work of art." As I understand him, Maritain is saying that the desire to write a poem, or the vision of the world as it might exist in a work of art—the capacity to see the world as potential poem—is poetic knowledge and honorable in its own right. Maritain offers us a perspective from which the

"source" or the "stuff" of "The Wasteland" or *To the Lighthouse* is of one piece with what a school boy might feel about the hum of telephone wires as he walks along a country lane—that this is wonderful and mysterious, and that its wonder and mystery are fixed in memory by the thought that "I could—I will—write a poem about this someday."

Minot State University (Emeritus)

The Putrescent Ass: Salvador Dalí and the Paranoiac Body

Raymond Spiteri

In July 1930 Salvador Dalí published an important article in the first issue of *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, entitled "L'Âne pourri." This article was an excerpt from his forthcoming book, *La Femme visible*, and it presented an outline of his theory of paranoiac-criticism, describing the primary role of paranoia in the elaboration and development of his imagery. In this paper I consider the role of paranoia in positioning Dalí's practice during 1929–30. Dalí joined the French surrealist movement at a moment of internal crisis, exemplified by the polemic between André Breton and Georges Bataille, and he was forced to negotiate the theoretical and personal differences that polarized surrealism into antagonistic factions. Although Dalí finally sided with Breton, his earliest public champion in Paris was Bataille, who recognized his own obsessions reflected in Dalí's work.

In contrast to Bataille's transgressive materialism, Dalí would assert the limitless character of the series of images provoked by the paranoiac process. Images ineluctably mediated any engagement with reality: indeed, according to Dalí, reality itself was nothing less than a simulacrum, an image which substituted itself for the real. Whereas Bataille's materialism confused the violence of the simulacra of images with that of reality, Dalí discovered new associations and images in this violence, in effect substituting a sideward displacement for Bataille's violent rent in the veil of knowledge. There was no escape from the mental processes of consciousness, and any position that claimed to offer such an escape was only allowing itself to be seduced by a simulacrum of the real.

If what characterized Dalí's work was the expansion of the process of symbolization from the locus of the scatological body into the fabric of contemporary culture, the opposite process fascinated Bataille: the violent collapsing of the process of symbolization, which he saw as a form of idealism, into the formless scatological body. The development of Dalí's work prior to 1929, particularly his obsessive focus on fetish objects, seemed to converge with Bataille's own notion of fetishism, in that Dalí appeared to abandon

symbolization in favor of the body in a state of decay. However, Dalí's work underwent an important transformation during 1929, when he sublimated his fascination with the scatological body onto the process of symbolization and its interaction with its external environment. Although Dalí ostensibly rejected Bataille's materialism, the scatological body continued to fascinate him, and his work oscillated between the scatological body and sublimation. Indeed, Dalí's celebration of paranoia was one effect of the tension between these two processes.

In articulating the role of paranoia in his work, Dalí sought not only to differentiate his illusionism from the pictorial automatism of other artists associated with the surrealist movement like Miró and Masson, but also to assert the active character of his approach to surrealism, in contrast to the passivity often associated with automatism. Dalí used the ready-made image to explore the process of symbolization as a sequence of images elaborated through time. Similarly, he employed the figural image as a nodal point in which differing interpretations of a form converged—what he termed "l'image multiple"—where the role of paranoia was to uncover the multiple associations of a figural image.

University of North Dakota

Marjorie Westriding Yrarier: A Mirror of the Modern Women's Movement?

Sherry Stoskopf

Marjorie Westriding Yrarier is the main character of Sheri Tepper's novel *Grass*. This novel takes place in a future where humans from Terra (a name often used to suggest or symbolize Earth) have overpopulated their planet and colonized many planets throughout the universe.

At this futuristic time, aristocratic women like Marjorie have rights and privileges roughly similar to the ones American women had in the 1960's. In the course of the novel, Marjorie's family is sent by the dominant church, Sanctity, to the planet Grass as ambassadors. Their real purpose is to discover if there is plague on the planet. The plague is occurring in most of the human population of the universe and is a threat to the continued existence of human beings. There is reason to believe that none exists on Grass and/or that there is a cure there. In attempting to help her ambassador husband find the answer to this question, Marjorie begins to assert her independence and to develop greater self confidence, roughly paralleling the results of the efforts of the Women's Liberation Movement of the 60's and 70's. The subsequent events of the novel bring Marjorie into greater contact with both

the aristocrats and commoners of Grass and offer opportunities for 2 comparisons and contrasts. The ending of the novel offers a solution Marjorie's personal dilemma that may suggest a future for women which may result from the Women's Liberation Movement.

Minot State University

Twentieth Century Propaganda Art in Spain and China

Kathleen Vacek

The Spanish Civil War and the Chinese Cultural Revolution were events that were closely bound to the ideological struggles of the twentieth century. Propaganda posters are intriguing artifacts of these events. Within a Cultural Studies framework, propaganda art may be used as a lens through which to view the Spanish Civil War and the Cultural Revolution. Close analysis of historical propaganda is a useful exercise that prepares us to respond thoughtfully to the propaganda we are exposed to today.

The context of the Spanish Civil War was the intensely ideological, polarized social climate of 1930s Spain. Organizations on both sides used propaganda art to gain supporters, influence behavior, and to attack their enemies. One sees an ideological table tennis match in the posters of opposing forces of the Spanish Civil War. Viewing Nationalist and Republican posters together provides interesting juxtapositions that highlight the polarized atmosphere of the war.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution was a cultural reconstruction project possible only under an authoritarian regime. Propaganda posters were tools for the dissemination politically correct thoughts, actions, and role models. Artists were extremely restricted, and Cultural Revolution posters communicate only the party line. Posters were composed almost exclusively of stock images and popular slogans. Messages changed as policies were adopted or discarded by the ruling elite. Several conclusions are drawn from a comparison of the artwork of the Spanish Civil War and the Chinese Cultural Revolution. First, a diversity of views tends to produce better, more creative art, while centralized control leads to homogenous and sometimes unimaginative art. Second, similar images can be manipulated to evoke either negative or positive reactions. Third, some symbols can transcend cultural boundaries. Finally, the absence of objective reasoning is a common element of all propaganda.

Independent Scholar

**Jon Norstog: Defender of a Norwegian Folk Language;
Crafter of His Own Literary Language in North Dakota**

Erik Luther Williamson

I. The Language Struggle in Norway during the Nineteenth Century: Norway became independent of Denmark in 1814 only to be annexed to Sweden. In 1905 Sweden conceded Norwegian independence. During this ninety-one year era, 1814-1905, the Danish language, imposed on Norway for over two hundred and eighty years, was no longer politic.

After 1814 the reconstructed Norwegian government modified Danish with such Norwegian words that the upper class accepted. This Dano-Norwegian (riksmaal), the Standard Language, used by Government, the Law, the University, and the Church of Norway. Nevertheless, many intellectuals wanted to abolish all "Danishisms," and out of the ten strong dialects craft the purest Norwegian, a (landsmaal), a Folk Language. In the process of molding, Poets, novelists and others wrote in this Folk Language as well as in their native dialects (bygdemaal). The State allowed the printing of books in dialect and the first forms of Folk Language, but refused to acknowledge such provincialisms in official papers.

The most prominent difference between the Standard Language and the Folk is the definite form of nouns. The Standard masculine suffix forms (-en) lorded over the Folk (-a), which was Standard feminine. Another difference is the Folk preference for inserting (j) in suffixes. Negative Adverb (NOT, NE PAS): Standard IKKE (ik-keh); Folk IKKJE (ik-cheh). The language spoken at large in contemporary Norway, 2003, is New Norwegian (nynorsk), which is a further mingling of Standard and Folk Languages.

II. Jon Norstog-Born Advocate of Folk Language and Dialect 1877-1902: On October 25, 1877 Jon Norstog was born in Vinje, Telemark, an isolated place. Telemark's dialect is rich with words unspoken elsewhere. The community of Vinje, in turn, boasts a subdialect. Jon's mother was cousin to A. O. Vinje, a published poet in Folk Language. The mother encouraged Jon to be true to Folk and dialect. Besides other schools Jon attended a church Latin School whence two teachers promoted Folk Language as a holy enterprise. Jon, who retained deep Christian piety all his life, took up the cause. Norstog planned to enter the University of Christiania (Oslo) which required an entrance examination in the Standard Language. Norstog wrote the examination in Folk Language. The University rejected his efforts. Norstog refused to write in Standard and thus barred himself from advanced studies.

His first book of verse, *Yggdrasil*, came out in 1902, was more Telemark dialect than Folk Language. Critics winced at his language; publishers refused to print more of his poems. In a huff Norstog declared that the free press

thrived only in America and hence he would emigrate there. In the same year he did, never to return, but once, to Norway.

III. Norstog's Writings between Iowa, 1902 and Minot, 1907: Norstog went to Northeastern Iowa and went to work for a Norwegian-American publishing firm. Norstog published his own literary journal of which he was nearly the sole writer, editor and printer. His poems were in the Telemark dialect and then some-his journal folded after six issues. In 1904 Norstog moved to Minneapolis, found a job with a Norwegian language newspaper and translated German poems into Standard Norwegian for the paper. To have his writings accepted in the Minneapolis paper, he had to write in the Standard Language. He retained his linguistic purity in his poetry, which he had to publish himself.

In 1905 Norstog moved to Grand Forks to be an assistant editor a Norwegian language newspaper. In 1907 he moved to Minot to be the sole editor of a paper. He had complete control over this paper, writing most of its contents. Yet he submitted articles to all the other Norwegian-American papers to publications back in Norway. At one point during the 1910s, Norstog became the most prolific writer of Norwegian, in both languages, in both America and Norway. Until the 1930s most Norwegian-Americans and Norwegians were cognizant of Norstog as a journalist, who wrote verse on the side, which was not as well read.

IV. The Perfection of a Literary Language in a Shack out on the Great Plains, 1910-1922: In 1910 Jon saw his father, brothers and sisters homestead in adjacent plots south of Watford City, county seat of Mackenzie County. Jon made his claim; his brothers farmed it. Jon built a Shack and edited the Minot paper from there, a hundred and fifty miles away, but he spent most of his time smelting his Fine Literature. Norstog labored at the Shack until the late 1930s, pondering his epics, printing them on his handpress and hawking his books to his bemused neighbors, and mailing copies to Norwegian and Norwegian-American editors, publishers and pastors. Jon drove his Buick all over the North Central States visiting his correspondents and writing travel articles resulting from his journeys. Wherever he was he wrote.

At his Shack desk Norstog hammered out his literary language. He delved deeper than Folk Language, diverging further from the Standard Language and He borrowed words, grammar and phases from all dialects. He chose words which suited his mood and his meter. Norstog's style is as if an American borrowed British cant, Australian lingo, Deep Southern draw, Bronx spite and Boston mannerisms. In short, he molded his own language, NORSTOGIAN for his Fine Literature (skjoenlitteratur). His longest volume, *KAIN*, 1912, exploits his language to the hilt. His best and longest Biblical epics, nine volumes, were written and printed at the Shack at this time.

Norstog wrote a children's book, a story-poem *TONE*, in 1912. A church publishing house commissioned Norstog to re-write it in the Standard

Language, though Folk Language is strong in the conversations. TONE, published in 1920, proved to be Norstog's most popular book.

V. The Last Decades, 1922-1942: All told, Norstog printed seventeen volumes of poetry in his Shack. Three volumes of poetry and his two novels were printed by American and Norwegian publishers.

The era of the 1920s and 1930s was a transition period for Norwegian America. The third generation preferred to speak in English and scorned Norwegian in speaking and reading. Fewer Americans were writing books in Norwegian; few such books were purchased. The Norwegian-American press declined rapidly. Jon Norstog lost readership; his *Minot* paper died in 1931. He wrote two prose novels to regain some readers. Unfortunately, his prose is too journalistic-his religious themes was better expressed in verse. In 1938 Jon wrote and printed his last volume of verse, HAVET, his most mature religious thought and his most intense Norstogian.

Henceforth he wrote on politics, stumped speeches, and made a living as a State game warden. In the Fall of 1942 he exhausted himself campaigning for a candidate for the U.S. Senate. His man won, but Norstog was haggard at sixty-five years old. On November 22, 1942, Jon Norstog suffered a stroke at home in Watford City and died with a doctor attending. His obituaries spread to every remaining Norwegian paper in America and to all papers in Norway. By 1945 Norstog was utterly unread and forgotten.

VI. Example of Norstogian-the Negative Adverb: Standard Language has IKKE (ik-keh) which is also Danish.; Folk Language and New Norwegian has IKKJE (ik-cheh). One dialect has INKJE; another has IK. Three dialects replace K with T-ITTE, ITTJE and IT. One subdialect has NEI (Nay), the simple No as adverb; another has EI (Aye). Norstog used all nine variants at the right places.

VII. Religious Thought in Brief: Man's greatest spiritual problem is Guilt. Man refuses to repent and to accept Forgiveness of Sins from Jesus Christ. Once he accepts his Forgiveness Man must accept God as God and himself as mere creature. In Grace Man must spend his remaining years living an upright life until he dies to dwell in an Eden-like Heaven. Human souls, unlike in Nirvana, retain their individualities in a SEA (HAVET) in which communication with all other souls and with God is perfect. Potent Illustration-God has Two Hands. In One Hand He holds all Humanity from Adam to the last born soul-the Sea. In the other Hand He holds the Individual.

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