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Book Reviews

Criticism Editors

From Outlaw to Classic: Canons in American Poetry by Alan Golding. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995. Pp. xvii + 243. $19.95 paper.

The American Poetry Wax Museum: Reality Effects, 1940–1990 by Jed Rasula. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1996. Pp. xi + 637. $32.95 paper.

These recent studies by Alan Golding and Jed Rasula use cultural studies and ideology critique to historicize processes of canonization within American poetry. Both treat canonization as a product of institutions and communities as well as of individuals, analyzing the reception and anthologization of both mainstream and experimental poetry. Aside from contrasting historical scopes (Rasula treats the last fifty years, Golding the last two hundred) and writing styles, their most salient difference is a matter of competing ideas of academic publishing. Golding's is the more familiar model—a crisp, lean, 243-page University of Wisconsin Press book, while Rasula's is a rarer form—an often brilliant, though also rambling, 637-page product of the National Council of Teachers of English.

Golding begins with a concise history of anthologies of American poetry that ranges from Elihu Hubbard Smith's *American Poems, Selected and Original* (1793) to Paul Hoover's 1994 *Norton Anthology of Postmodern Poetry* and reminds us that the question of evaluation must be understood to complicate versions of literary history that see anthologies only as matters of preservation and revision. Golding demonstrates how for early anthologists, "a poem's, or indeed the whole canon's, claim to excellence rested on its embodiment of national characteristics" (6). For Smith, this is secular federalism—which means that both Jeffersonian democrats and puritans are not included. This type of ideological argument is more effective than some of Golding's specific historical claims, as for instance when he treats the anthologies (all published in the 1870s) of well-known poets such as Bryant, Emerson, and Whittier by linking their conservative selections—in particular their exclusion of Whitman and Dickinson—to a reading public affected by "the disorienting effects of the Civil War and of rapid economic expansion." Though his chapter does not develop this context, it effectively sketches a history of organizing principles that moves from federalism though popularity and chastity of thought toward cultural critique and newness in the early twentieth century.

In his second chapter, Golding makes his own case for how canonization occurs by arguing persuasively against what he claims is an overstated view of institutional control in Terry Eagleton and others, as well as against the poet-centered view of canonization we find in critics such as Helen Vendler, Hugh Kenner, and especially Harold Bloom. The limitation of a

model of poets canonizing poets is that critics do not "question from where the later poet derives his or her putative power to canonize" (57). To take issue with Vendler's claims that poets always respond to other poets at the level of style, Golding shows how John Berryman "responds to [Ann] Bradstreet's social and historical situation" (59). In a productive act of synthesis, Golding understands canonization as a matter of individual agency that can attain long-term effects only through institutional mediation. Golding then argues, in chapter 3, that counter to its impulse of uniting theory and practice, New Criticism helped to bring about the current antagonism between "creative writing" and theory—first through its battle with historical scholarship, and second by gradually downplaying the explicit work of evaluation so that canons, of English lyric poetry in particular, seemed to emerge naturally. Thus the New Critical rejection of Whitman (whose nationalism, radical democracy, and "loose" poetic form were anathema to the New Critics) occurred because he failed to deliver the limited effects New Critics attempt to generalize as the essential products of "poetry."

These arguments are slightly more familiar than those developed in a similar vein in chapter 4, which makes a compelling case for understanding "literary history not only as a history of individual careers, important books, and competing discourses but also as a history of writing within *communities*" (121). By looking at the magazine *Origin*—which provided early outlets for the work of Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, and Denise Levertov among others—Golding charts the relations among editing, publishing, and canonization. Golding's point is precisely not to detail the mission of *Origin*'s editor Cid Corman—who is shown, for instance, struggling unsuccessfully to understand Charles Olson—but to demonstrate how *Origin* created and distributed authority across careers, and how it created alternative canons. Golding's fascinating analysis of letters by Corman, Olson, and Creeley, among others, demonstrates how, because of a smaller publishing field, a single little magazine in the early 1950s could challenge dominant poetics to a degree that is impossible now. Treating in detail how a single magazine could not merely reflect but "*create* a movement or a sense of community" (122) prepares the way for Golding's consideration, in chapter 5, of Language writing's relation to processes of canonization both within their "self-created network of little magazines and presses" (121) and in their relations to academia.

This is Golding's best chapter; it defends Language writing against the easy charges that it both lacks the political efficacy it wants to claim and has been co-opted by the university. Golding disarticulates early, less tenable claims within the movement (in particular Ron Silliman's argument that realism is a form of reification) from the larger possibility that

Language writing is producing meaningful change at the level of how we understand literary history in relation to academia. First, because Golding has throughout the book made a compelling case for the academy as an unavoidable mediating force in poetry's canonization, he can now assert that "criticism of Language writing's assimilation into the academy rests on an impossible, ahistorical wish for an ideologically pure, uncontaminated avant-garde that successfully resists cooption by the institution that it attacks" (147). Instead, following Louis Althusser and Raymond Williams, Golding suggests that we see Language writing as an attempt at "changing the mediating institution of the academy from within" (146). To focus on the institutional matrix of Language writing's production and reception, Golding continues, "enables us to defer dubious claims for the poetry's '*inherently* subversive' nature in favor of more tenable claims for its *contextual* subversiveness" (158). Language writing is valuable for its ability to make visible the "machinery of interpretation and of institutions" (160).

While Golding brilliantly describes institutional contestation from within, Rasula's book attempts to enact it by inventing a new form of properly irreverent critical writing for both charting previous canonization effects and constructing an intellectually responsible form of poetry history. Characterized by virulent critiques, page-long metaphors, and the fabrication of critical terms like "voice-over" and "canontology," Rasula's book imagines a wax museum on San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf as the appropriate space for the chiseled poetic busts implied by our existing forms of literary history and in particular by the most recent Norton anthologies of poetry. Throughout, Rasula constructs a rich network of "them," at times called "the culture brokers" (2), and if it's correspondingly unclear who "we" are, I must admit wanting to be included.

Rasula's first chapter uses recent critical work on museums along with a battery of postmodern theorists to develop this important and useful parallel between poetry anthologies and museums. For him, "American poetry is not a pragmatically demonstrable state of affairs, but a social 'imaginary,' something that exists only in display" (31). To foreground these conditions of display, Rasula pries into American poetry's obsession with the would-be immediacy of poetic voice: "The seemingly autonomous 'voices and visions' of poets themselves have been underwritten by custodial sponsors who have surreptitiously turned down the volume on certain voices, and simulated a voice-over for certain others" (33). If at moments in Rasula's text this appears to be a condition produced by bad anthologies and ahistorical criticism, at other moments—and I would say less convincing ones—this is simply what it's like to write under late capitalism: "After the corporate voice-over becomes generically indistinguishable from public discourse, any act of communication is a form of bereavement, insofar as it is the active reminder of how we perpetuate our own captivity" (44).

By depicting post–WWII poetry as a vast symptom of the voice-over, Rasula downplays the range of poetic practices—Black Mountain, New York School, Language writing—that often understand voice as a contested effect rather than a natural point of departure. Though Olson and the Language writers emerge, later in the book, as less voiced-over than others, insofar as Rasula himself tends to assume a voice that would diagnose totalized cultural conditions of the voice-over, he mixes down the interesting noise made by concrete, contestatory practices of both writers and anthologists.

Rasula's second chapter is 250 pages long. Its arguments about the institutional underpinnings of mid-century American poetry build from a critique of the New Critics for, among other things, using science as a straw man, through the Pound Affair (his award of the Bollingen Prize after having been indicted for treason) as a would-be test of New Critical reading principles—"an image of explosive intensities neatly contained by experts" (118)—to an original survey of how the reputations of mid-century poets (John Berryman, Theodore Roethke, and especially Robert Lowell) were built. Lowell emerges as a New Critical wind-up doll, a "metrical automaton" (151) whose carefully managed career—"his success was in effect a committee fabrication" (ibid.)—Rasula nonetheless charts with a fascination reserved for the paranormal. Rasula is funny. He has the ability—as any good wax museum docent should have—to blur the lines between the monumental and the undead. Though the chapter's main thread occasionally disappears—as when Rasula spends several pages setting up Louise Bogan as a non-partisan witness (for what begins to read like a nineteenth-century novel about twentieth-century poetry) and then abandons her before she has had an impact—frequent brilliant insights from the narrator keep one reading.

One example is Rasula's sketch of ways that "poets with effectively *vocal* styles" (270) benefited from the emergence of the reading circuit—an important and as yet uninterrogated mid-century poetry institution; perhaps an even stronger one is his project of distinguishing concepts like poetry as "process" or engagement with "tradition" and "history" when applied to the mainstream poetics of Roethke and Lowell from the quite different (and more demanding) conditions these concepts often impose on the New American Poetry: "If 'process' could be associated with the free verse set pieces of Roethke, largely on the basis of thematic peculiarities like his botanical imagery, Olson's pronouncements on such matters as proprioception, dreamtime, and Whitehead's cosmology were bound to place him at the lunatic fringe" (239). Similarly, Rasula articulates the shift in the meaning of "tradition" brought about by the New American Poetry:

> Where "tradition" had become narrowly configured by Shakespearean blank verse, a handful of English metaphysicals,

> and by Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, Keats, and a cultural Eurocentrism, a much vaster assembly now billowed into sight—borne aloft by renegade autodidacts—ranging from Whitman, Dickinson, Blake, and Smart all the way back to Hesiod, taking into account T'ang China, Mesopotamian dynasties, Sanskrit poetics, Oceanic and native American oral traditions, and a range of modern poetries in other languages. (246)

Finally arriving at the question of history, he argues, "Mainstream American verse has often blithely taken history to amount to little more than an evocation of images retained from childhood initiation to the platitudes of nationalist rhetoric; and the 'sophisticated' poets appear to be those, like Lowell, who extend their references to Renaissance Florence, Periclean Athens, or Hannibal crossing the Alps—in short, set pieces suitable to nineteenth-century kitsch genre painting" (289).

A thorough and intelligent critique of what counts as "history" in poetry history organizes Rasula's third chapter, which surveys writings by Bloom, Vendler, Robert Pinsky, Charles Altieri, Daniel Hoffman, David Perkins and Jay Parini. "Some of the things that might be expected from a literary history," Rasula suggests reasonably, "are examinations of discursive formations; community networks and collective action; the material dimension of publication, distribution, reviewing; the original contexts of poets' own debates and rivalries; and, not least, a text that can be *consulted* . . . for information about poets who have not received much, if any, critical commentary" (354). What we get instead in *The Columbia History of American Poetry*, edited by Jay Parini, and in David Perkins's *History of Modern Poetry* is "normative theme and career profile essays in literary criticism" (354) that consider only a few poets, all mainstream. It is not so much this chapter, but rather Rasula's book as a whole, that can be taken as a convincing antidote.

Rasula's chapter on Language writing (which received attention when it originally came out in *Critical Inquiry* and later in the anthology *Politics and Poetic Value* edited by Robert von Hallberg) appears here prefaced with a twenty-page inquiry into the differing forces of voice-overs: for or against mainstream poetry, one cannot quite "imagine opening the latest volume by Marge Piercy, and finding corporate logos gracing the white space at the bottom of the pages" (379). What kinds of political effects are left for poetry if it operates in a realm distinct from the largest corporate interests? Not those traditionally associated with "oppositional politics" at the level of theme, like Adrienne Rich, whose "obligation of political reference" and "swollen poetic intensity" are, for Rasula, "grounded in methods of emotional manipulation" (393). Though such poetry might have the strategic

functions Rasula denies, he is convincing in his larger critique of Jerome McGann's distinction between poetries of opposition and accommodation—a distinction that "posits politics as a realm separate from poetry, which poetry can only report on or represent" (391). Instead, Rasula argues that "more than politics *in* the poem; there is also a politics *of* poetry, and this is what language poets have largely addressed from the outset" (ibid.). Rasula does a good job explaining what it might mean that the Language writers are also publishers, readers, and critics. Because Language writers are not "mutual celebrants of poetry as initiatory cult" but members of "a community of *readers*" (397), their "group identity" works "to make public the conceptual underpinnings of issues that had originated in private exchange" (394). This of course breeds suspicion: "Criticism written by poets has often been misread as a deviant method of self-justification, which it then becomes the critic's job to decode and realign with the poetry. With the Language poets the case is complicated be the patently *dialogic* character of the theoretical adventure" (404–5).

The consequences of such dialogue and theory not being a part of the creative writing workshops of the Associated Writing Programs is the subject of Rasula's final chapter, an analysis both of the institutional underpinnings of the workshop tradition and of several recent anthologies. My only quarrel with this generally good chapter is Rasula's suggestion that while the editors of several recent anthologies of avant-garde poetry are "transported by the reverie of the outside, the experimental, the dissident," at the same time they perform an "explicitly conservative function in purporting to trace a genealogy of the vanguard" (461). Though Douglas Messerli's *From the Other Side of the Century* and Paul Hoover's *Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Poetry* are far from perfect anthologies, despite their problems (which I don't have space to consider) the collections actually trace a number of genealogies. Neither should their editors apologize to the contemporary world for making precedents available. Such an act, as Rasula himself reminded us in a remark I quoted earlier, is obviously not *inherently* conservative. It seems to me more possible to maintain a dialogue with anthologies so long as they remain interested, particular, and not straining toward some kind of encyclopedic closure. Rasula's fine appendices can be taken as a direct extension of his argument. They include:anthologies published since 1950; most anthologized poets (alphabetically and by number of appearances), poets by birth date; anthologies of translated poetry; prizes and awards; poets by the number of critical studies done on them; and books of poetry criticism since 1960.

Both of these books constitute major contributions to poetry criticism and theory. Though Rasula's stagy rhetoric occasionally causes imprecision, his experiment of reconstituting the language of poetry history and criti-

cism will be of great value to those suspicious of monumentality and unsatisfied with criticism as the merging of psyches. In addition to being a useful new reference source, his book will remain important as a bright, humorous tour through the uncertain ground between poetic legitimacy and social pathology that makes up mid-century poetry. Golding's service is both more specific and more general: he provides a clear and consistently insightful account of the ideological substratum of American poetry canonization over the last two hundred years. Along the way, Golding's well chosen case studies also demonstrate how 1950s little magazines and Language writing can usefully complicate existing models of canon formation and literary history.

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Echoes of Translation: Reading between Texts by Rainer Nägele. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. Pp. 143. $29.95.

The task of translating difficult authors was recently taken up in an article in the *New Yorker* by Cynthia Ozick, who comments on new translations of Kafka's works that make Kafka more palatable to our present tastes. Still, at the end of her article, Ozick not only laments the untranslatability of writers like Kafka but cites Walter Benjamin's essay "The Task of the Translator" and his view that the object of a translation is neither meaning nor communication. If Benjamin aimed for palpability of a "pure language" that should shine forth in the translation of an idiosyncratic use of language by keeping its feeling tone, then Benjamin's project is indeed not what Ozick makes it out to be: "Platonism incarnate: the nonexistent ideal is perfect; whatever is attempted in the world of reality is an imperfect copy, falls short, and is useless" (*New Yorker*, 11 January 1999, 86).

Rainer Nägele's *Echoes of Translation* demonstrates quite the opposite perspective on Benjamin's essay. In Nägele's view, Benjamin pleads for the materiality of language and for the unfamiliar connection between words that turn them into new metaphors in the translator's own language. Accordingly, it is only through translation that we get a glimpse of what is at stake in language, of language per se. Nägele has already written extensively on the subject of language and the displacement of meaning in Benjamin's philosophy of language, and this new book joins his previous works by taking up Benjamin's sources in Hölderlin, Baudelaire, and Freud.

In exemplary readings of these authors, with the brief addition of a discussion of Nietzsche, this book reveals more than his earlier writings about how Nägele learned to read from Walter Benjamin.

Indeed, a theory of reading allegorically in the intertextual space between texts and languages is at the center of this book. Reading here is meant to be a creative process, opposed to identification and empathy or *Einfühlung*. Unlike *Einfühlung*, which is but a projective identification of self with an other, reading constructs a new language and a different, unpredictable figure in which the historical relationship between the biographical and cultural/political sphere is illuminated. Nägele is one of the few writers on Benjamin who consistently links Benjamin with Freud and interpretation with psychoanalysis in order to train his readers to hear the resonances of one language in another's. From the grasp of these resonances or echoes an intertextual figure emerges that characterizes reading as a praxis of translation rather than as exegesis. Of importance in this praxis is the rewriting of unconscious traces of experience whose sensual impact can be felt, instead of a retracing of reflective consciousness. Here Nägele moves toward the body in language: in demonstrative readings he shows truth effects of language that rupture the illusions of a psychology of consciousness and reveal the splitting of the subject in its historical experience and affect. Nägele is after a kind of presentation (*Darstellung*) that escapes representation. And he accomplishes this by revealing and constructing an allegorical structure in the texts together with their translations.

In an essay on *Echolalia* he takes Benjamin's "Task of the Translator" to task for avoiding the slippage of meaning into the arbitrariness of language.His model translator and poet here is Hölderlin, who exemplifies Benjamin's "task": to translate the syntax of the original text literally at the expense of destroying the idiomatic structures of words in his own language. What is gained by this strategy is a new scriptive image or figure that is opposed to the sound of the words that constitute it. The force of change in word positions—words lose their hold in idiomatic syntax—hollows out the word like an "arcade" in a "wall of syntax." But in this hollow the melancholic echo of its former usage (meaning) refracts from the walls of its new surroundings, and what *resounds*—Nägele builds on Benjamin's shift in sensorium from eye to ear (*Vernehmen*)—can be cognized historically (*Vernunft*). This resounding is a sense of recognition, and ultimately of remembrance, for which a new word or coinage has to be found. This is the moment in reading as translating where an original sensation is relived and language is only anticipated but not spelled out. Hence, the sensation has no written presence but exists in what Lacan would call *parole vide* (empty speech) in juxtaposition to what Nägele criticizes as misguided

Einfühlung, *parole pleine,* or "full speech": "Cognition aims at an anticipation or divination of a language *in* which it can impart itself as remembrance" (41). Nägele's point is that language is not an expression of cognition; its signifying effects are independent of any authorial control. For Paul de Man—and, for Nägele, too, who is indebted to him—the phenomenality of what the words say is cancelled, and hence the displaced word no longer intends referential meaning but language per se, that is, a nonrepresentational language in which the echo of the original tone of feeling becomes tangible in its effects. Rather than *seeing* the thing behind or through the word, one feels a sensation that has no concrete, representable image.

Examining Hölderlin's use of the names of the ancient Greek gods, Nägele pursues the loss of phenomenality in modernist poetics, always reminding us this kind of poetics—Baudelaire, Nietzsche, and Kafka are other examples—is a form of translation of an older symbolic system into a new one. Such a translation does not exchange one for another but stages the clash of both symbolic systems in the poetic text itself. Allusions to the "true experience" of the gods is juxtaposed with the "mere allegorical" use of their names by problematizing both usages. For Nägele this staging of the clash of symbolic usage results in the allegorical staging of a loss of experience altogether. With the loss of a symbol, the meaning of the gods is, however, not lost, for the gods reappear as "allegorical anxiety" and inform the poet's rhetorical intensity. In other words, they lose the power of the name as they become "mere language"—words that say something else than they mean. Dionysus and Apollo are refigured into signs of sexuality and death joined in the name of the Mother (Earth). As *the* figures of representation in modernity, Dionysus and Apollo also represent the melancholic nature of representation (*Darstellung*). Poetic representation in modernity gains its meaning effects from an ongoing allegorical subtext of mourning. The name "mother" produces the figures of the ancient gods and with them longing and taboo. An example is Hamlet, who, in Freud's words, has become a "secular progression of the repression" of Oedipus. But, it seems, representation thrives on repression; and its allegorical reading, in the vein of Nägele, makes this constitutive repression and its linguistic effects visible in the text at hand.

Nägele's treatise on reading as translation culminates in his third essay on the figure of Eros and the feeling tone of love and unconsummated desire in literary translations, especially in Hölderlin's translation of Sophocles's *Antigone* and Benjamin's translation of Baudelaire's poem "A Une Passante." The essay turns on the Eros *of* and *in* translation, placing Hölderlin's and Benjamin's translations against each other. How can ancient Eros be transferred into modern literature and culture? What of *him* or *it* is

transported? Nägele answers that it is the body, in its transformation from the image of perfect beauty to the melancholic staging of its decomposition (as corpse) and its dismemberment in the modern sexualized emphasis of its erogenous zones. Eros figures as the intrinsic power of translation that exerts its agency of transgression by shattering the forms of language. There is no reconstruction, only construction. When translation of sense between languages breaks down, the force of translation, or rather of language—what Benjamin calls "the kernel of pure language"—appears in its own right. *Antigone* and the "Passante" poem are the manifest appearance of a translation of Eros, a translation from male to female. Natural Greek beauty has turned into a figure of art and of civilization and its symbolic order. Eros undoes the perfect unity of being. It unsettles the being of the subject in that it shatters the house of being. What is the house of being in this context if it is not language? Nägele construes Eros in his meticulous multilingual readings as that which names the "transfer and transport itself in a radical split of oneself from oneself" (109), which Hölderlin translates as "madness." If words don't make sense anymore, the effect of Eros is the apparition language itself, which in Hölderlin and Benjamin has the status not of being but of becoming (*Werden*): being in the grips of (linguistic) Eros becomes a "becoming." Eros dissolves nature and turns it into culture. In this position—often associated with Dionysus—Eros becomes identified with the creator of names, the creative words of translation, of translation as performative word. As such, translation cannot but be an artifact that is produced in the space between the visible or phenomenal sense of the word and the absence of this sense in the translator's language. "Becoming," whether it is the becoming of pure language in Benjamin's sense or Hölderlin's becoming of great understandings, requires a certain amount of destruction of what is—of what senses we are used to. For readers to "sense" such a becoming, translation has to be pushed to the limit of semantic understanding: "But at this limit the kernel of the preface on the task of the translator is silhouetted in the knot of overdeterminations" (117). As long as we can feel the desire in language, we will not give up the task of generating understanding, since it is precisely this desire for understanding, for becoming what one is no longer, that reveals desire to be part of the logos, the word that creates.

Nägele certainly has accomplished a highly creative task of reading between various texts in several languages (Greek, German, French, and English) pulling senses and allusions from each language and weaving them together—not only for a model of how to read intertextually and sensitively, but also for the construction of an allegorical figure of translation itself. The prefix *"trans-"* alludes to that which is both beyond and different from what is said. For Nägele, then, reading as translating cannot be

accomplished except in metaphorical structures that highlight the sense, without naming it, that something is carried over and passes—unless we capture it in our listening to the words rather than in seeing them on the page. But such readings can hardly be accomplished without the knowledge of other languages and without a knowledge of the literary tradition, both of which train the ear for meanings in other linguistic and cultural contexts. Nägele's is a book that our students ought to read because it does try to know the "je ne sais quoi" that makes literature mean differently from ordinary language.

Nägele's argument might be more readily understood if he had brought more concrete psychoanalytic insights into how language constructs experience for us as readers to help answer the question why it is that we cling to the positive or phenomenal sense of words. Why is there resistance to reading compared to ready(made) interpretation? If the ear seems to be the key to reading, is not language also broken up by the emphasis on sound in the Walkman? How does this overwhelming sound make sense to the listener; it certainly makes him or her feel the transport, a being transported in an erotic and physical sense.

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Shakespeare and the Spectacles of Strangeness: The Tempest *and the Transformation of Renaissance Theatrical Forms* by John G. Demaray. Pittsburgh, Penn.: Duquesne University Press, 1998. Pp. 174. $48.00.

The overwhelming visuals and sounds of *Prospero's Books,* Peter Greenaway's film adaptation of *The Tempest*, left me exhausted after two hours in my seat. So visually striking was the film that my companion did not even recognize it as Shakespeare. Greenaway's emphasis on the visual is appropriate to the original conception and staging of *The Tempest* according to John Demaray. His new book develops some of the interests in theater and spectacle found in his earlier works, *Milton's Theatrical Epic* and *Milton and the Masque Tradition*. He argues that the initial staging at Whitehall and the courtly audience influenced the masque-like structure and content of the text of *The Tempest* as we have it in the First Folio. Demaray makes an important point when he insists that a critical consideration of *The Tempest* would be incomplete without addressing the contexts of its original production.

As the First Folio is Demaray's primary evidence, he has followed Sidney Lee's contention that the Devonshire copy of the First Folio (Huntington 56399) is the most accurate (139). Using this copy of the play enables Demaray to avoid any contentions that an edited edition might raise. Demaray's analysis of *The Tempest* sheds light on Jacobean stage technology, poses answers to several of the play's critical problems and responds to twentieth-century critics who tend to focus on selective elements of the play at the expense of the whole.

The book begins with an overview of the critical reception of *The Tempest*. Though the play is grouped in the First Folio as a comedy with a traditional five-act structure, Demaray believes this classification is not authorial, but has to do with the unifying comic ending. He claims the play's sequence of events lends itself more to a continuous series of scenes than to a five-act division, which was probably the work of an editor. According to Demaray, the play itself is a transitional work, marking the change in theater from staged dramas to elaborate, spectacular Restoration dramas such as William Davenant's adaptation of *The Tempest* (1670).

For Demaray, the play fuses elements derived from masques, continental *balets de cour*, court spectacles, and theatrical *intermezzi*: "A Prologue and induction; antic episodes of conspiracy and confused 'mazy' wanderings; Spectacles of Strangeness magically ending the conspiracy and serving as fulcrums of action; Triumphs involving the 'unmasking,' reconciliation and reentry into society of the central figure and a final Epilogue" (60). *The Tempest* is thus a series of linked episodes of magic, rituals, and thematic oppositions (46) providing constant spectacle on stage, but never establishing or developing a complex plot.

Demaray analyzes the play as a hybrid of masque and Latin drama forms, but he also draws attention to the play's unifying elements. Scenes of disorder are balanced against scenes of control and integration. By the play's end, every lost character is found, sleeping sailors have been awakened, and explanations given. But rather than end with a ballet or revels, as a masque would, *The Tempest* concludes with a planned return to the "real world" of Naples with the assistance of Prospero's magic. The ending is harmonious, but with a touch of contrast.

The strongest influence on the play, Demaray finds, comes from the masque tradition and, inevitably, from Ben Jonson. Part of Demaray's thesis rests on seeing *The Tempest* as a play which marks a transition from stage drama to spectacle, but also from Jonson's neoclassicism to the use of original "hinges" or hieroglyphics, adjusting works to social and political pressures.

Court playwrights such as Thomas Campion and Samuel Daniel were constantly modifying or even rejecting Jonsonian neoclassical iconography and hieroglyphics in order to provide timely and popular court entertainments. In composing *The Tempest*, Shakespeare was in a similar position.

The storm and wandering images draw on the *Aeneid*, but the magical island, the strange spirits, and visionary shows also allude to current topical matters. The island and shipwreck are familiar both from classical literature and current events, specifically, the wreck of the *Sea Adventurer* in 1609 in the Caribbean. The symbolism and allusion are not fixed, allowing a variety of possible interpretations.

Demaray regards this combination of inventiveness and neoclassicism as one of the sources of the unanswered questions about allusions to specific historical events or people. Prospero may be Shakespeare, John Dee, King James, or as Demaray muses, Inigo Jones. The character's origins, though, are in the central figures of Triumph spectacles, often a personification of Britain as in Anthony Munday's *The Triumph of a Re-United Britain* (1605). Caliban is an anagram for cannibal, but the character is familiar as an antimasque grotesque, or related to a Bacchus figure, or to the masque character-type base "Earth" (55). Both characters are amalgams of influences. Neither original nor entirely allusive, they are, like the symbolism, open to interpretation.

Demaray's contention that Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* specifically to be performed at Whitehall occupies the center of the book. Though the play was most certainly performed at the Blackfriars and the Globe, ample evidence is drawn from contemporary records and the text itself to make a strong argument for Whitehall as the initial site.

Used frequently for masques and plays by Jonson, Inigo Jones, and others, the proscenium stage at Whitehall was technologically very sophisticated. More so than the Globe or the Blackfriars, the Whitehall stage had the potential of shutters, flat scenery, machinery for moving scenery, and a variety of traps and levitation devices. The stage directions and character descriptions in *The Tempest* would have functioned best on such a stage.

A Whitehall staging provides a convincing solution to the editorial quandary over the stage direction at IV.i.72 in *The Tempest*, "Juno Descends." This occurs some thirty lines before the characters verbally acknowledge her presence. Rather than moving the stage direction, as some editors have done, the elapsed time is accounted for by a post-and-beam stage machine which would have allowed a slow steady descent from above the stage. The post-and-beam machine is sturdy and controlled from the rear of the stage, allowing movement in two directions simultaneously. Other stages' rope-and-pulley system would have been much more cumbersome and difficult to control.

The seating and stage at Whitehall are also alluded to in the text. Prospero asks the assembled characters to look in at his cell. "This Cell's my Court . . . pray you looke in" (V.i. 166–67/D[evonshire MS.]17). With the stage at the same level as the King's seat, the audience's eyes would have been drawn from one to the other. Only the King would have had an uninterrupted perspective. Prospero at this point reveals his own seat as

ruler of the isle, but acknowledges and reveals James I's as the ruler of Britain.

The offstage space and use of flat scenery at Whitehall would also have enabled smooth and frequent costume changes, which would have been more difficult at a theater like the Globe. The stage machinery would have allowed for a continuous sequence of action, uninterrupted by pauses for scenery or costume changes. Ariel in particular makes a series of costume changes, into and out of a Harpy guise (between III.iii and IV.i/D. 13), that would have been smoother on a proscenium stage.

Demaray concludes with a study of the play's symbolism, which has elements of the "open" court symbolism found in works like George Chapman's *The Memorable Maske of the two Honorable Houses of Inns of Court*. Chapman's masque contains symbolism so fantastic and classical as to be "surrealistic" (116). *The Tempest* is perhaps not as extreme, but it is formed around a tension between an ideal, innocent, utopian vision of society and the imperfect, sometimes coarse, real society. This theme is manifested primarily in scenes of discovery or revelation. When Prospero reveals Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess, Sebastian calls it "A most high miracle" (V.i.177/D.17). But as Demaray points out, Miranda's and Ferdinand's conversation is of deception:

> Mir. Sweet Lord, you play me false.
> Fer. No my dearest loue,
> I would not for all the world
> Mir. Yes, for a score of Kingdomes, you should wrangle
> And I would call it faire play. (V.i.171–175/D.17)

Although the sight of the living Ferdinand is miraculous, the lines are of a teasing lie, playful though it may be.

The discoveries also lead to a sense of self-knowledge. Gonzalo later in the same scene exclaims, "In one voyage [we have found] all of us ourselves / when no man was his owne" (V.i.207–13/D.18). Once the characters learn no one has died and they are able to return home, they find life has improved. Ferdinand has found a wife and Prospero will return to Milan.

The Epilogue reveals the tension created by the hybrid character of the play. A typical drama would not contain such a revelation, but a masque Triumph or procession would. Only the actor playing Prospero unmasks; the other actors do not reveal themselves to the audience. To do so would be too close to an intrusion of commoners into the aristocratic world. The actor playing Prospero is allowed the gesture, Demaray argues, because he would have moved off-stage to the main floor, below the level of the audience. The revelation thus highlights the difference between an ideal stage society with a harmonious ending and the real court society with its ranks and divisions.

The quantity of information about Jacobean stage technology and courtly performances is perhaps the most striking element of the book. Demaray has combed through performance records, details of expenditures, a great number of contemporary dramatic works, and original printed editions of plays and masques. He provides seventeen illustrations, including stage machines, photos of a model of Whitehall, and Inigo Jones's sketches. Illustrations from Nicola Sabbattini's handbook of stage mechanics, *Practica Di Fabricar Scene*, are particularly helpful in visualizing the Whitehall stage.

Demaray's careful reading of the text and contexts of *The Tempest* and of the drama of the day allow him to critique readings of *The Tempest* which seek to find colonial or anticolonial elements in the play. Caliban, for example, does seem charmed by Stephano and Trinculo, but they misjudge him as well, a phenomenon familiar from the masque spectacle tradition. In Milton's *Comus* the title character similarly misjudges a human woman as something divine. Demaray maintains that Caliban is not characterized as a human from any known colonized space; he is more of an elemental earth spirit as Ariel is an elemental air spirit. He argues that to focus on Caliban or any other specific character as particularly symbolic or allusive—as an exploited native, for example—without examining the play as a whole is reductive criticism.

Demaray is certainly correct in his emphasis on analyzing *The Tempest* in its entirety. The conception of open symbolism, however, would seem to allow a variety of interpretations to exist simultaneously. To say that *The Tempest* is a play entirely concerned with colonialism would be reductive. But to suggest that the character of Caliban cannot be seen as a colonial "other," among other things, would also seem to be inaccurate. Allowances must be made for a variety of readings which do not necessarily negate one another.

Though the bulk of Demaray's book is concerned with *The Tempest* and its contexts, other plays and masques are discussed. The transition occurring in Jacobean theatrical practices and *The Tempest*'s position in that process are well marked by Demaray. Elements of earlier, Latin plays can be found in *The Tempest* along with the more spectacular and innovative masque forms that would make it an appealing play before and after the Restoration. Demaray provides a convincing description of the play as a spectacular piece designed for a courtly audience accustomed to such entertainment.

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Romanticism and the Self-Conscious Poem by Michael O'Neill. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. xlv + 308. $75.00.

Michael O'Neill's subject, stated on the first page of his Introduction, is "poetry that displays awareness of itself as poetry" (xiii). The book's thesis is less straightforwardly presented but the various components are in view by the Introduction's end some thirty pages later. Self-reflexivity in poetry is an index of aesthetic achievement, and this feature or quality is discovered in the canonical six male poets of the early nineteenth century (on the authority of Helen Vendler an engagement with gender issues is politely declined). Romantic poetry differs from earlier examples of self-conscious poetry (two sonnets of Shakespeare and a poem of Marvell's are the only examples), and bequeaths this difference to post-Romantic poets such as Yeats, Stevens, Auden, and Amy Clampitt, a few of whose works are discussed in an extended three-chapter coda. It is not clear what "post-Romantic" means because the definition—it implies "affinity with and distance from Romanticism" (237)—tells us nothing, especially since earlier we were told that Keats's induction to *The Fall of Hyperion* ushers in post-Romantic reflexiveness (219). The "problem of coverage" (xxxviii) is solved by means of the touchstone method. Sections of poems, sometimes a line or two, in a few cases readings of whole poems such as "Resolution and Independence" and "The Sensitive Plant"—all are offered "as examples of what is finest in their overall achievement" (xxxix). It is important to note that the argument has a polemical purpose. In putting forward a "refreshed" (xxxvi) sense of Romantic aesthetic achievement, O'Neill wants to show that the recent approaches of historical contextualization and ideological critique, specifically Jerome McGann's, are misguided and betray what is most valuable in Romantic poetry. O'Neill intends "to give respect where respect is due—to the art and vocation of poetry" (xliv).

The eleven chapters, all of which have been published separately, do not yield to summary or paraphrase. Touchstone method aside, the coverage is spotty and gives an impression of arbitrariness: twenty-one pages are devoted to ranging over Blake's entire work, but twenty-five of sixty pages on Shelley are devoted to one poem. One poem each by Yeats and Stevens is discussed. Book Five of *The Prelude*, on books of course, is not mentioned, while a section of *The Excursion* is offered as a defense of that work. What motivates the selection in each case? A loose, intuitive "taxonomy" (xxvii) of three very indistinct kinds of self-conscious poetry is sketched out in a few pages of the Introduction, but apparently this taxonomy is not

an organizing principle and one forgets it entirely until we are reminded that it exists on page 125. There are fine isolated insights that show that O'Neill is closely attuned to the movement of a poetic line, but the internal structure of the book is barely in evidence. O'Neill's topic and his polemical purpose require theoretical and methodological expertise, but this is not his strong point, and the book will not convince by force of sensitive readings loosely connected to a central claim. The thesis is less a fully worked out and substantiated argument than it is an ethos or a statement of faith, something along the lines of "literature never did betray the heart that loved her."

The case against O'Neill is formidable. He appears to be blithely unaware of critics who have systematically taken up the topic of self-reflexivity before him. One thinks immediately, for instance, of Lucien Dallenbach's *The Mirror in the Text* (1977), which is mostly about narrative, but its typology of *mise en abyme* would have been a useful starting point. For instance, it would have provided a framework for O'Neill's observation on the Maniac in *Julian and Maddalo*, that his speech "thematizes and provides a correlative for Shelley's relation to his own poem" (139), and it would have stimulated the identification of other examples. Neil Hertz's subtle analysis of specular moments in which he charts what he calls an "end of the line" structure, several of them from *The Prelude*, might have figured usefully as well. It is possible that, had O'Neill investigated the scholarship, he might have found things that would have added substance to his case, but that case would have had to be taken up on a more advanced level of discourse. As it is, O'Neill's polemic against historical criticism is both misdirected and incoherent. It is typical of this book that when it addresses the issue of "evaluation" it turns instinctively to Ivor Winters and Leavis rather than to Barbara Herrnstein Smith on aesthetic value and John Guillory's comprehensive critique of Smith in *Cultural Capital* (1993). The interesting question, at least for me, is whether aesthetic approaches can be integrated with historical ones, whether we can describe the ways in which they are bound up with or indispensable to one another, and Guillory's book is one instance that opens up further serious thinking.

O'Neill's approach "centres on the aesthetic achievement signalled and made possible by poetic self-consciousness" (xxvii). But self-consciousness alone is not sufficient to indicate artistic achievement; it is not even enough to guarantee that one is dealing with literature. Let's briefly review a line of thinking that has been central to twentieth-century literary theory but may have been eclipsed in the recent vogue for antitheory polemics.

Roman Jakobson, in a widely influential article, "Linguistics and Poetics" (1960), described six different functions of language, one of which

was the "poetic. " In the poetic functioning of language the focus of attention, Jakobson claimed, was language itself, and the effect was to promote an awareness of "the palpability of signs" and deepen the "fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects." By this definition of literariness Jakobson argued that the distinguishing feature of literary language was its self-reflexivity, its awareness of itself as a medium. Literature, then, by its very nature is reflexive. But the poetic function is only one of six. In literature it is dominant, but it may exist in other kinds of language as well where it will be subordinated to a different dominant function in a different hierarchical organization. This also means that the poetic function is not the only function of language in literature, leaving open the question of engagement with social or moral issues.

Following Jakobson but specifically citing the precedent of Monroe Beardsley, Paul de Man in "Semiology and Rhetoric" (1975) refined the argument to claim that literature was the place in which language was aware of itself as rhetoric, by which he meant figure. The implication de Man drew was that, at crucially important moments, literature was unreadable because figures were unstable and could not be reduced to the logicality of a grammar. The thickness of signs, Jakobson's "palpability," impeded the very process of meaning construction; this experience of frustration, in de Man's view, was not only inevitable but salutary because it brought the reader up short. What careful reading (in de Man's sense) led the reader to was self-awareness, an alertness to the imperial tendencies of the intellect to reduce to its own rule whatever it comes into contact with, or, in other words, to make the text a mirror of itself. Literature, it appears, is a veritable hall of mirrors.

When, very late in the game, O'Neill observes of *Hyperion* that "the medium occupies centre-stage" (225), the reader can legitimately ask, why only here? A similar sense of opportunities missed occurs when O'Neill discusses "Peele Castle," which of course is a meditation on Beaumont's painting: "Reference to an artwork in another medium allows Wordsworth to explore what he is (and should be) doing in the poem itself" (55). A consideration of ekphrasis (the word does not appear in this book) might have been useful. It might have led to a reading of Shelley's poem on Leonardo's Medusa with its brief but rich tradition of commentary. It might have organized a chapter around other instances. I do not mean to suggest that O'Neill should have written a book to my prescription. But I do want to register how unsatisfactory I find it as a reader to encounter a book on this topic which gives the impression of deriving its newly discovered insights from unmediated encounters with individual poems rather than engaging productively with what is already available in the critical tradition. The general impression this book leaves is of how much it refuses to take on

board, how much it refuses to argue explicitly, how much it simply takes for granted.

O'Neill does not like historicist critiques because they demystify art to get at its social implications. What he misses, in my view, is the extent to which historical criticism is a methodological version of self-awareness, ostensibly his subject. He dissents from McGann's ideological critique, but does not take seriously enough McGann's explication and adoption of Bakhtin in "Keats and the Historical Method in Literary Criticism" (1979). Thus the whole issue of historical awareness and historical difference gets submerged, or rendered trivial, in a view of aesthetics which celebrates the fact of art or the skill of the artist to the exclusion of any other consideration.

Actually, I would argue, any account of artistic achievement must rely, wittingly or not, on some form of historical explanation. For if a wide range of language uses may include the poetic function in Jakobson's sense, then it follows that what counts as Literature in a specific place and time is defined by more than the properties of its language. The issue is thrown into relief especially in claims for change or difference. Thus, O'Neill opens his book with a familiar gesture in much Romantic criticism, the assertion that Romantic poetry is different and original. Yet, as we see shortly afterwards, difference and originality must be asserted in historical-cultural terms:

> Romantic poetry is a poetry that is creating the taste by which it might be enjoyed, in part a consequence of a shift away from patronage to the more impersonal laws governing the marketplace. Yet enquiry into possible socio-economic determinants of Romantic self-consciousness is not my concern. Instead I concentrate on its continued literary value. (xxii)

The idea that "socio-economic determinants" might actually be part of the *content* of the self-consciousness of a Romantic poet, and that a response to these things might also be in some way constitutive of "literary value" rather than opposed to it, apparently never occurred to O'Neill.

In fact, O'Neill never investigates or substantiates his claim for a "significant difference" (xiii) in Romantic poetry; he points to only a few instances in two writers before the Romantic period (dismissing the eighteenth century entirely), whereas it could be easily argued that writers have traditionally used devices such as ekphrasis or other forms of *mise en abyme* to signal heightened moments in their texts. So what is the difference? How define it? Are we dealing with the development of a technique, similar to the increasing occurrence of free indirect discourse in prose fiction? One

would want to know, to take one example, what exactly the difference is between the quality of self-reflexivity in Pope's *Windsor Forest* (Earl Wasserman's reading of the Lodona episode would be a point of departure) as opposed to what one finds in Romantic poetry. But that sort of inquiry could only be carried out by means of historical or literary-historical explanation. Self-consciousness in poetry is not simply the deployment of the traditional devices by which art foregrounds, and at times indeed demystifies, its own procedures, medium, or condition of enunciation. It also involves with these devices the writer's engagement with pressing contemporary issues, broadly cultural when not specifically political. If O'Neill took seriously his own observation about Shelley, that the poet is "increasingly conscious that he does not write in a cultural, generic, or historical vacuum" (141), then his differences with "politically correct critics who think that systems of social relations hold a poet's pen" (210) might have been productive of more than mere caricature.

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Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering by Marita Sturken. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. Pp. 384. $45.00 cloth; $16.95 paper.

One might say that, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, American culture has embraced mourning. Thus Marita Sturken's intriguing exploration of cultural memory, as it negotiates the boundaries between private memory and historical record, is more than aptly timed. Her work is divided among the memorials of the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and the AIDS epidemic. Each of her examples can be classified as a moment of rupture in the threads of time; it is those frayed ends, that gap between the truth and the telling, that resists closure and becomes Sturken's *Tangled Memories*. Framing her study of remembrance in the 1980s and 1990s, she analyzes first how our culture memorializes those who died an initially unsung death, then those who fought in a war notable for its absence of death, and finally those who, while still walking among the living, are perceived as being the already dead. Throughout the text, she investigates the forms that social remembrance takes and demonstrates how personal experiences are translated into a cultural memory that rescripts the authorized account of an event. Her book does not disregard individual recollection, loss, or sorrow, but instead weaves those strands of remem-

bering into the collective memory that can define a culture's sense of nation and history.

Sturken first develops the premise that, while memory can be embedded in objects associated with an event, photographs and video can also be catalysts in the *creation* of memory. She uses the Zapruder film of the Kennedy assassination, the televised explosion of the *Challenger*, and the videotape of Rodney King's beating to reveal the importance of the image in our culture's history making. It is not so much what the image *is* as *how* the image is viewed. Rather than simply capturing a memory or showing what really happened, the gradual transformation of the Zapruder film from Time-Life stills to popular culture streaming (as in Oliver Stone's *JFK*) has created a collective, albeit false, memory of witnessing Kennedy's assassination live on television. Sturken argues that it is exactly this coloring of cultural memory, this sense of having an intensely personal moment of shock and sorrow and simultaneously sharing it with the entire country, that creates for many a means of identifying with the national culture. There are obvious connections between the *Challenger* explosion, which *was* televised live, and the Rodney King videotape, which was televised *at length*. Sturken discloses the cultural meanings of all three of these images as they have been appropriated, reenacted, and rescripted—first by the media and then later by the law. She deftly maneuvers the image, and its cultural status, into a means of shifting the national memory.

When Sturken brings us back to the screen and memory, she is no longer referring to the cathode-type screen that carried the aforementioned images into American culture. In the cultural memory of the Vietnam War, the screen, acting as both backdrop and barrier to individual experiences of the war, is embodied by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The dichotomy of the personal versus the cultural in history is carried through her look at whose voice is validated and reverberated by the memorial and whose echoes of experience are condemned to bounce silently off the glossy stone. After its controversial construction, the Wall became a site that erases the authorship of individual memory and transforms those objects first left by individual mourners at the site—collected as "lost and found"—into cultural artifacts. Rather than becoming a memorial that seals the narrative of official history, Sturken shows that the naming of the dead allows each strand of individual memory to loop outward and encircle concentric communities of pain and sorrow. This, along with the wounds of war permanently etched upon the flesh of the veterans who flock to the site, refuses redemption and, while offering solace to some, resists the efforts of others to put to rest the dead.

We return again to the power of the image as Sturken reveals the influence of cinematic representations on the cultural memory of Vietnam. She

effectively demonstrates how films transcend the traditional icons of war within cultural memory, creating meaning beyond the original frame of the incident. Her examples of popular culture's depictions of Vietnam are well chosen and succinctly discussed, showing how the films themselves have become forms of memorial. As she points out, much of America receives its education in history through this medium, and Vietnam is being rewritten by the cultural memory located in these productions. What little use society initially had for those who returned alive from the jungles of Southeast Asia is rescripted in the prolific release and popular reception of screenplays that portray a romantic heroism in the lone man battling the evils of both the VC and D.C.

When Sturken shifts her attention to the Persian Gulf War, it is not because she is done with the subject of Vietnam. Instead she builds an argument that the Gulf War, and its handling by the media, was a direct reaction to the currents of the cultural memory of Vietnam that were still flooding society. It is often the memory of the previous war that dictates the future of manufactured war. While cultural memory influenced the revision of the Vietnam War, Sturken also suggests that the military impetus behind the Persian Gulf War was to create a historic turning point that would rewrite Vietnam (and Korea) as momentary digressions in the narrative of U.S. history. In her dealings with Vietnam and cultural memory, Sturken had established the body as a site of memory; now, she redirects that same stream of thought into the deserts of the Gulf War. But where does one construct such a memorial when there are no casualties of war? In a surprising but successful twist, Sturken locates this cultural memory in the Gulf War Syndrome as it continues to force the revision of a war that was intended to be a simple and singular narrative in history.

How appropriate that Sturken, who rarely relinquishes her tight reign upon this text, leads us from a bloodless war into a battle with blood. Looking at the AIDS epidemic and its many representations in cultural memory, Sturken returns us to the iconic aspect of the body—this time the image is of PWAs (Persons with AIDS)—and the politics with which the body is currently marked and marketed. The same merchandising that is used to raise funds for research has also been accused of commodifying and victimizing PWAs. Entire communities have been retailored as a result of the AIDS epidemic: according to Sturken perceptions of gay lifestyle, once patterned by the sexual act, have now been altered to fit the healing and compassionate individuals seen among the ill and the at-risk, while black and Latino communities have been torn by the media's insistent categorization of their PWAs as drug addicts. The cultural status of AIDS is being renegotiated and rewritten as it transverses the (culturally) constructed communities of gays, blacks, Latinos, drug users, and heterosexuals.

Sturken predicts that the cultural memory of the AIDS epidemic, with its complex politics and changing population, will resist closure in society.

With AIDS, as with the Vietnam War, the authority of individual memory is undermined by the mass memorializing of victims. Here the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt is compared to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Sturken's juxtaposition of the physicality of the handcrafted quilt and the etched enamel of the Wall speaks to the issues of masculinity and national identity she raised in earlier chapters on the Vietnam Syndrome. The quilt creates an atmosphere similar to the scroll of names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Much like the objects left behind at the Wall, the panels of the quilt both represent the ways in which individuals have mourned and simultaneously dissolve into anonymous emotions when viewed in their sheer number. The Quilt travels to the spectator in bits and pieces, and Sturken includes here an analysis of the importance of the location of (or, in this case the inability to concretely locate) a memorial. The AIDS Quilt is not permanently affixed in any official capacity—neither in sanctioned history nor at the Washington Mall. Perhaps this makes the memorial even more appropriate, as the AIDS virus itself is not fixed within the body but is instead constantly circulating within the blood. In her last chapter, however, Sturken does posit that the virus is in one sense already fixed within memory—more specifically, it is recorded in the immune system. With micrographs she is able to produce images that are the equivalent of "popular culture" representations. At times it seems she is as determined to deride the news media as she is to develop the cultural memory of AIDS, but rather than dissolving into senseless tirade, this tangent remains pertinent when the reader keeps in mind the often unbalanced relation of "science" to "story" in the saga of AIDS. In this sense, Sturken has little difficulty in comparing the enlarged microscopic images to the stylized mushroom clouds of war or in associating the terminology used to describe the progression of the disease to hypermasculine narratives about espionage and guerilla warfare.

Just as we are still fighting the war against AIDS, it would seem that we are still writing our wars against the Iraqis and the Vietnamese through the cultural memory of these events. In a society inundated with images of war and death, the meaning (and the making) of memorials is, now more than ever, in constant flux. Sturken does not attempt to *un*tangle the fragile bonds that tie our experiences to our history; instead she focuses on, and succeeds at, convincing her reader that *how* we remember, as well as what we forget, weaves the fabric of *who* we are.

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Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting by James R. Kincaid. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998. Pp. vii + 352. $24.95.

Some might complain that James Kincaid's latest book is a mere repetition of his thesis from *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (1992), but if so, it bears repeating. First, Kincaid is helping to define the field of Childhood Studies, not only by treating childhood as a social construction, but by providing a methodological link between literary and cultural studies.

His central premise is that childhood is socially constructed by adults, thus a cultural concept more than a biological factor: "The child is functional, a malleable part of our discourse rather than a fixed stage; 'the child' is a product of ways of perceiving, not something that is *there*" (19). As a result of adult desire, projection, nostalgia, and frustration, childhood is a repository of negations, defined by lack. Kincaid views this process as eroticizing youth. But as a pedophilic culture, the West (Kincaid is diplomatically general in his finger-pointing) is in denial, creating a mythology of pedophile scapegoats from which to distance and through which to purify ourselves. Rather than denying that true pedophiles exist, he argues that there is also a degree of pedophilia in the imagery and discourse of mainstream culture that must be recognized as such if we are to change the myths and constructions that perpetuate it.

When readers get past any hysterical indignation they might feel about Kincaid's diagnosis, they will likely recognize its truth. *Erotic Innocence* is rigorous in its presentation of evidence, rendered particularly effective by a creative but critically reliable methodology. In the introduction, Kincaid directly opens his argument: "Our culture has enthusiastically sexualized the child while denying just as enthusiastically that it was doing any such thing" (13). In "Trapped in the Story," Kincaid illustrates this point with a revealing critique of the public response to a Los Angeles high school teacher who was (falsely?) accused of molesting her student. His reading exposes the prejudicial power of the stock narratives our culture conveniently supplies in such circumstances, reminding us not to believe the storyline before the facts. This analysis prepares his reader for a larger look at our culture's pedophilic metanarrative.

In the following chapter, Kincaid briefly provides a genealogy of this narrative, explaining that the concept of childhood developed in conjunction with modern sexuality: "One somehow got implanted in the other, and

it shouldn't have happened" (52). Both historically and theoretically, Kincaid shows how childhood is problematized by sexuality and its inherent connection to it.

In the next chapters, the most effective of the book (and those of particular interest to cultural and literary studies), Kincaid goes on to establish our culture's denial of this connection, our denial of that denial, and the resulting bifurcation of children into "angels and ghouls" (30). This is done mostly with evidence from court cases, news publications, and film. He compares "real life" images of children with filmic ones, juxtaposing them with great ease and convincing rhetoric. More importantly, he offers causal explanations: we cast children as angels out of nostalgia and as devils out of envy and resentment, because of our own inability to repossess childhood. Kincaid's final chapters thus aim to expose the scapegoating of public figures, and other victims of dubious accusations, while debunking the pedophilic myths that surround them. Scapegoating and mythmaking create false security in clearly defining pedophilia as identifiable and elsewhere. We wash our hands of our own child-loving.

Kincaid's premise of childhood's constructedness is particularly useful to those interested in literary and filmic representations of childhood, but also to cultural studies in general. In continuing with Philippe Ariès's constructivist approach, Kincaid is answering to a new interest within cultural studies concerning age as a social, not just biological, factor of subjectivity/identity. More original, however, is his contribution in setting a methodological example.

It was his seemingly inconsistent methodology in *Child-Loving* that critics disliked. This, in my opinion, is more indicative of the lack of consensus across fields than of problems with Kincaid's scholarship. For example, historians criticized Kincaid's lack of chronology and historical framing. Literary critics were displeased with the awkward and minimal use of close textual reading. Social historians and folklorists were disappointed with Kincaid's lack of empirical data or child testimonies. But one thing these critics have in common is missing the point, a point that Kincaid refined and makes more clearly in *Erotic Innocence*. He is not writing as a historian or social scientist; he is a cultural and literary critic, and as such his focus belongs to language and discourse. By evaluating Kincaid's work according to these standards, readers will appreciate the field he is engaging, Childhood Studies.

In response to *Child-Loving*, Don R. Cox points out that his book "is anecdotal, a montage of bits and pieces of culture selected into a pattern that seems to make a meaningful statement" (*Nineteenth-Century Literature* 48: 392). What better way to describe the fusion of cultural studies and close reading? Though his sources seem scattered and gratuitously chosen,

the book does make a meaningful statement, and in its methodology serves as an example of how close readings can be informed by cultural studies. Cox also writes that *Child-Loving* "is not really a book about Victorian culture so much as it is a book about our culture" (390). In fact, Kincaid seemed to use the Victorian setting to show the genesis of cultural pedophilia and reflect on the twentieth century. In *Erotic Innocence*, evidence and theory cohere because Kincaid limits his focus to twentieth-century America, where the phenomenon is rampantly demonstrated due to the information explosion and media saturation. Kincaid also shifts his focus from an overly diverse set of textual exemplars in *Child-Loving* to a coherent grouping of American film sources (from the 1950s to the present) to substantiate his point.

Most significant, and indicative of the field's liminality, were twentieth-century critiques of Kincaid's approach from the perspective of child-centered study. Maria Tatar wrote of *Child-Loving* that, "without any real data about the inner lives of the targets of pedophilia, Kincaid can only repeatedly point the finger of blame at our horrified fascination with child abuse. . . . He is no closer to getting inside the mind of the child than those who tell the story about depraved adults victimizing children" (*American Literary History* 7: 742). But Kincaid is not trying to study the mind of any individual child; he is critiquing discourse that constructs a generalized notion of "the child": "What we think of as 'the child' has been assembled in reference to desire, built up in erotic manufactories. [We] have been laboring ever since, for at least two centuries, both to deny that horrible and lovely product and to maintain it" (4). Kincaid's task is to read representations of childhood, not a child's mind.

In *Erotic Innocence*, his reading of these representations produces some explanations for our intense love/hate relationship with children in discourse: that adults are nostalgic for their lost past, yet resent children who remind us it cannot be repossessed; that we displace images of heaven and hell onto children to compensate for lost religion; that we use children as a "philosophical weapon against skeptical and secular rationalism" (53), thus associating childhood with both peace and anarchy, innocence and irrationality; that we use children as transitional objects regardless of our need, because children are easy to construct without having to face empowered resistance. For the most part, however, Kincaid glosses deeper causes and blames pedophilic narratives. His method is to illustrate adult desire more than to analyze it.

Throughout the book, Kincaid emphasizes the textuality of the pedophilic phenomenon. The problem is based in cultural narratives that in turn perpetuate the problem. The solution? He forewarns in his introduction, "We need only tell different stories. We can do that" (6). Perhaps

the final chapters are his least effective in that they follow this cyclical nostrum. Although his main goal is to rewrite the floating narratives of child-centered eroticism and pedophilia-phobia, his own logic calls for deeper phenomenological analysis. He applies psychoanalytic principles in his reading of cultural narratives but neglects to provide a specific analysis of adult desire, a deeper understanding of which would help to rewrite the narratives of our culture or automatically heighten our critical awareness of the old ones. But how can we purge without a further causal investigation of adult desire? Beginning and ending at the level of the "stories," we overlook root causes. After all, our culture has created the stories that create the problem—can we change such fundamental mythmaking without a more personalized understanding?

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