Volume 96 Number 1

Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

January 1981



Searching the Drowned Man

POEMS BY SYDNEY LEA

"The poems of Sydney Lea create, even in their apparent unambitiousness, a coherent and heart-touching world. Mr. Lea converts factuality into a poetry of depth, small observations into something as deep as ritual...He has the subtlety of mind, emotion, and ear to achieve this in a genre in which many fail."—Robert Penn Warren.

"The book balances a remarkable number of poetic accomplishments, but best of all is that Lea knows what New England *sounds* like. Every season, beast, landscape, time of day or time of life has its particular musical tone and color...Lea is a fine regional poet, in the same sense that Frost was first and foremost a poet of place." — *Publishers Weekly*. Cloth, \$10.00; paper, \$3.95

Postmodern American Poetry

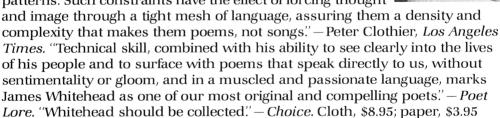
JEROME MAZZARO

"These seven self-contained essays on Auden, Jarrell, Roethke, Ignatow, Berryman, Plath, and Bishop attempt to define the forces central to the stylistic and philosophic concerns that motivated and shaped each poet's work. ...Mazzaro is generous in the range of his sympathies, sharp in his insights, and lucid in his presentation. Recommended."—*Library Journal.* \$13.50

Local Men

POEMS BY JAMES WHITEHEAD

"Like exceptionally crafted, well-thought-out country songs, these poems accept certain thematic conventions: love, women, drink, work, fight and fellowship—one of Whitehead's risks is to work close to the contended bone of macho values. ... The poems work within such well-defined formal conventions as the sonnet and metrical patterns. Such constraints have the effect of forcing thought



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS

BOX 5081, STATION A, CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820

January 1981

PMA

Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

Volume 96 Number 1

PUBLISHED SIX TIMES A YEAR BY THE ASSOCIATION

The Modern Language Association of America organized 1883 INCORPORATED 1900

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1981

President: PETER DEMETZ, Yale University

First Vice-President: WAYNE C. BOOTH, University of Chicago

Executive Director: JOEL CONARROE

Deputy Executive Director: Hans Rütimann

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

For the term ending 31 December 1981

BARBARA BOWEN

University of Illinois, Urbana

JAMES LAWLER

University of Chicago

MARJORIE G. PERLOFF

University of Southern California

For the term ending 31 December 1982 For the term ending 31 December 1983

RUTH K. ANGRESS
Princeton University
WALTER H. SOKEL
University of Virginia
RUTH H. WEBBER

Rutgers University
BARBARA K. LEWALSKI
Brown University

GITA MAY

PAUL FUSSELL

Columbia University

TRUSTEES OF INVESTED FUNDS

GORDON N. RAY

University of Chicago

Guggenheim Foundation, Managing Trustee

C. WALLER BARRETT Charlottesville, Virginia

ROBERT LUMIANSKY

American Council of Learned Societies

PMLA (ISSN 0030-8129) is issued six times a year, in January, March, May, September, October, and November, by the Modern Language Association of America, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011. Membership is open to those persons who are professionally interested in the modern languages and literatures. Annual dues, which include subscription to PMLA, are based on members' salaries and are graduated as follows: student members, \$10; unemployed regular members, \$10; regular members (first year), \$20; regular members (salary under \$12,000), \$25; regular members (salary \$12,000-\$15,000), \$30; regular members (salary \$15,000-\$20,000), \$35; regular members (salary \$20,000-\$25,000), \$40; regular members (salary \$25,000-\$30,000), \$45; regular members (salary \$30,000-\$35,000), \$50; regular members (salary over \$35,000), \$55; joint members (with only one subscription to PMLA), add \$10 to dues category of higher-paid member; foreign members, same as regular members. Membership applications are available on request.

The subscription price of *PMLA* for libraries and other institutions is \$52. A subscription including a bound volume at the end of the year is \$130, domestic and foreign. Agents deduct 10% as their fee. Single copies of the January, March, May, and October issues may be obtained for \$7.50 each; the November (Program) issue for \$20; the September (Directory) issue for \$35.

Issues for the current year are available from the MLA Publications Center. Claims for undelivered issues will be honored if they are received within one year of the publication date; thereafter the single issue price will be charged.

For information about the availability of back issues, inquire of Kraus Reprint Co., Millwood, NY 10546; (914) 762-2200. Early and current volumes may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Purchase of current volumes on film is restricted to subscribers of the journal.

OFFICE OF PUBLICATION AND EDITORIAL OFFICES 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011 Tel.: 212 741-5588

All communications including notices of changes of address should be sent to the Membership Office of the Association at 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. If a change of address also involves a change of institutional affiliation, the Membership Office should be informed of this fact at the same time.

Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing office.

Copyright © 1981 by The Modern Language Association of America.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 12-32040.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Membership Office, Modern Language Association of America, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

Contents · January

Editor's Column	3
Pushkin's Saturnine Cupid: The Poetics of Parody in <i>The Tales of Belkin</i> . David M. Bethea and Sergei Davydov	8
Abstract. The Tales of Belkin have suggested that they are not what they seem—a cycle of simple, diverting stories. Why Pushkin chooses to filter the telling of the Tales through several narrative voices, why he puts "poetic" epigraphs into ironic play with "prosaic" narratives, and why he develops the narratives around a web of allusions to major Western literatures and to Russian literature have led to a lively, expanding discourse among Pushkinists. But why Pushkin frustrates the Russian character who imitates a foreign model, why he takes the poetic models of the epigraphs as points from which to "step down" to prose, and how he sees the parodic debate between foreign and domestic models as a necessary step in the development of Russian prose are unanswered. Moving toward a new reading of "The Coffinmaker," the asymmetrical story generally considered of only anecdotal interest, our essay addresses these questions. (DMB and SD)	
The Antigone as Cultural Touchstone: Matthew Arnold, Hegel,	
George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Margaret Drabble. GER-HARD JOSEPH	22
Abstract. Matthew Arnold asserts that because the motivation of the Antigone's heroine is obsolete the play's action no longer interests us. This dismissal contrasts sharply with Hegel's recurring celebration of the tragedy's ethical and dramatic perfection. Moving between these positions, George Eliot accepts the modernity of Antigone's character as moral pioneer but finds the play's action without much application to Victorian reality. For Virginia Woolf Antigone is a natural counter within the feminist polemic of Three Guineas and an image capable of complex novelistic development in The Years, while Margaret Drabble's The Ice Age makes the purported irrelevance of Antigone's motivation to the 1970s the very basis of the play's absurdist appeal. The Antigone thus serves, pace Arnold, as an Arnoldian touchstone to correct his merely "personal estimate," that of a statist who might naturally object to the heroic treatment of an individual in defiance of the state's claim to primacy. (GJ)	
Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction. NANCY K. MILLER	36
Abstract. Feminist literary criticism over the past decade has raised the important issue of woman's relationship to the production of prose fiction. Central to the inquiry have been both the desire to identify the specificity of such a "corpus" and the reluctance to define it by inherited notions of sexual difference. Reading Mme de Lafayette's La Princesse de Clèves with George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss in the context of this double agenda suggests the possibility of deciphering a female erotics that structures the plots of women's fiction, plots that reject the narrative logic of the dominant discourse. Traditionally, the critical establishment has condemned these plots as implausible and generally assigned women's novels a marginal position in literary history. Perhaps the grounds of that judgment are less aesthetic than ideological. (NKM)	

6 Contents

Empty Center and Open End: The Theme of Language in Michel Butor's L'Emploi du temps. LORNA MARTENS	49
Abstract. L'Emploi du temps is a metapoetic roman à thèse that demonstrates the views on language Butor expresses in his theoretical essays. Parodying Proust, Butor undermines the idea that memory or language can recover an authentic layer of experience. By creating a text on two levels, a level of unsuccessful referentiality and a level of language as an autonomous entity, he replaces the notion of a vertical relation between text and referent with the notion of the bookto-be-continued. As description cedes to metaphor, metaphors crystallize into myths, and the narrator's "original experience" comes to reflect previous works of art, Revel's retrospective diary blossoms into imaginative creation. The "empty center" of the referential narrative, the missing date February 29, becomes the open end of Revel's novel. Four double metaphors—the labyrinth, the map, weaving, and the mirror—which are crossover points in the novel's chiastic structure, engage both the referent (Revel's year in Bleston) and the process of recreating it in writing. (LM)	
Blake, Crane, Whitman, and Modernism: A Poetics of Pure Possibility. Donald Pease	64
Abstract. The proponents of modernism, in their putative wish to be free of inherited patterns, release a compensatory reaction, an anxiety over the sense of a lost relationship with tradition. In this context, the critical dogma lamenting the "anxiety of influence" may be seen as one modernist's attempt to regain a relationship with the past at the expense of the equally recalcitrant doctrine of originality. But this most recent defensive reaction only represses an even deeper anxiety over the loss of the present moment in the inevitable formal quality of literature. As a way out of this impasse, the modernist poet Hart Crane returned to William Blake and Walt Whitman, whose poetry of pure possibility does not mediate the present into a durative past but recovers it as a possible present, a coming again of what is ever more about to be. (DP)	
Truth and Calliope: Ezra Pound's Malatesta. MICHAEL F. HARPER	86
Abstract. Among critics who accept the Aristotelian distinction between "poetry" and "history," those who recognize that Pound's Cantos aspires to "history" generally consider it bad history and "impure" poetry; critics who value it as poetry usually dismiss its claim to history. But Pound's aesthetic recognizes no essential difference between poetry and history; a poem, for him, is a report of its author's experience, and by reading historical documents as attentively as poetry, one can penetrate to the reality behind them, too. A good literary critic is therefore the best historian. The Malatesta Cantos show this theory in action; Pound's Sigismundo, derived from a critical reading of primary sources, seems more plausible than the one found in most secondary sources. These cantos show that Pound's attempts at writing history should be taken more seriously than they have been and that his achievement as an epic poet should be reevaluated. (MFH)	
Forum	104
Forthcoming Meetings and Conferences of General Interest .	108
Professional Notes and Comment	120

PUBLICATIONS OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA Published Six Times a Year Indexes: Vols. 1-50, 1935; 51-60, 1945; 51-79, 1964

EDITORIAL BOARD

JONAS A. BARISH, 1982

University of California, Berkeley

DORRIT COHN, 1981 Harvard University

JAMES R. KINCAID, 1981

University of Colorado, Boulder

MICHAEL RIFFATERRE, 1982

Columbia University

ELIAS L. RIVERS, 1981

State University of New York, Stony Brook

LARZER ZIFF, 1981

University of Pennsylvania

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JAIME ALAZRAKI, 1984 Harvard University

CHARLES ALTIERI, 1982 University of Washington

SACVAN BERCOVITCH, 1983 Columbia University

LEO BRAUDY, 1983 Johns Hopkins University

VICTOR H. BROMBERT, 1983 Princeton University

HANNA K. CHARNEY, 1984 Hunter College City University of New York Cornell University

JONATHAN D. CULLER, 1982 Cornell University

STUART CURRAN, 1982 University of Pennsylvania

Franco Fido, 1983 Brown University

ERIC P. HAMP, 1983 University of Chicago

IHAB HASSAN, 1983 University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

CONSTANCE B. HIEATT, 1982 University of Western Ontario

Paul A. Jorgensen, 1982 University of California, Los Angeles

U. C. KNOEPFLMACHER, 1981 Princeton University

JOHN W. KRONIK, 1981

Wolfgang A. Leppmann, 1983

University of Oregon LAWRENCE I. LIPKING, 1984 Northwestern University

MARTIN MEISEL, 1982 Columbia University

DAVID H. MILES, 1983 University of Virginia

SIDNEY MONAS, 1983 University of Texas, Austin

JANEL M. MUELLER, 1981 University of Chicago

STEPHEN G. NICHOLS, JR., 1984

Dartmouth College

ELAINE C. SHOWALTER, 1983

Rutgers University

CATHARINE STIMPSON, 1982

Rutgers University

JOSEPH A. WITTREICH, Jr., 1984 University of Maryland,

College Park

RUTH BERNARD YEAZELL, 1984

University of California,

Los Angeles

ALEX ZWERDLING, 1982

University of California, Berkeley

Editor: JOEL CONARROE Managing Editor: JUDY GOULDING Editorial Supervisor: CLAIRE COOK Assistant Managing Editor: ROSLYN SCHLOSS Administrative and Editorial Assistant: MELODY J. DURAN Assistant Editor: IRENE ZUBIEL

A STATEMENT OF EDITORIAL POLICY

PMLA welcomes essays of interest to those concerned with the study of language and literature. As the publication of a large and heterogeneous association, the journal is receptive to a variety of topics, whether general or specific, and to all scholarly methods and theoretical perspectives. The ideal PMLA essay exemplifies the best of its kind, whatever the kind; addresses a significant problem; draws out clearly the implications of its findings; and engages the attention of its audience through a concise, readable presentation. Articles of fewer than 2,500 words or more than 12,500 words are not considered for publication. Translations should accompany foreign language quotations. The MLA urges its contributors to be sensitive to the social implications of language and to seek wording free of discriminatory overtones.

Only members of the Association may submit articles to PMLA. Each article submitted is sent to at least one consultant reader and one member of the Advisory Committee. Articles recommended by these readers are then sent to the members of the Editorial Board, who meet periodically with the Editor to make final decisions. Until a final decision is reached, the author's name is not made known to consultant readers, to members of the Advisory Committee and the Editorial Board, or to the Editor.

Submissions, prepared according to the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, should be addressed to the Editor of PMLA, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011. The author's name should not appear on the manuscript; instead, a cover sheet, with the author's name, address, and the title of the article, should accompany the article. Authors should not refer to themselves in the first person in the submitted text or notes if such references would identify them; any necessary references to the author's previous work, for example, should be in the third person.