

Abstracts

- 16 **Irene Siegel, A Judeo-Arab-Muslim Continuum: Edmond Amran El Maleh's Poetics of Fragments**
 The work of Jewish Moroccan writer Edmond Amran El Maleh (1917–2010) explores the coextensive experience of Muslims and Jews in Morocco and the larger Arab-Mediterranean region, tracing a continuum of Judeo-Arab-Muslim affiliation. This notion of affiliation is reflected in a highly dynamic, fluid poetics, fed by a secular engagement with Jewish and Islamic mystical traditions and with a range of modernist and postcolonial writers. El Maleh found deep inspiration in Walter Benjamin's work on the ethical dimension of allegory as informed by kabbalistic notions of language. The chaotic profusion of events and images in El Maleh's third novel, *Mille ans, un jour* ("A Thousand Years, One Day") reflects Benjamin's "Kabbalistic shard" and his valorization of the "scraps of history." This discursive mode challenges the totalizing narratives and racialized binaries undergirding forms of violence that El Maleh identifies in colonialism and fascism, as well as in contemporary Zionism. His work thus aims to dissolve the false oppositional binary through which the identities of Jew and Arab have come to be understood. (IS)
- 33 **Elizabeth B. Bearden, Before Normal, There Was Natural: John Bulwer, Disability, and Natural Signing in Early Modern England and Beyond**
 Disability studies scholars and Renaissance scholars have much to learn from early modern schemata of disability. Early modern people used nature and the natural to discriminate against and to include people with atypical bodies and minds. In his writings, the English physician John Bulwer (1606–56) considers Deafness a natural human variation with definite advantages, anticipating current concepts of biolinguistic diversity and Deaf-gain, while acknowledging his society's biases. He refutes the exclusion of sign language and other forms of what he calls "ocular audition" from natural law, which made capacity for speech the benchmark for natural rights. Instead of using Deaf people as exceptions that prove the rule of nature or as limit cases for humanity, Bulwer makes deafness part of a plastic understanding of the senses, and he promotes the sociability of signed languages as a conduit to a universal language that might be encouraged and taught in England. (EBB)
- 51 **Tammy Clewell, Beyond Psychoanalysis: Resistance and Reparative Reading in Alison Bechdel's *Are You My Mother?***
 Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir *Are You My Mother? A Comic Drama* promotes a form of reparation for its author and its readers, making a case for the much-maligned idea that literature serves therapeutic aims. The book not only models a reparative reading practice by using comics form to engage the insights and limits of psychoanalysis and modernist literature but also elicits a reparative reading experience for a community of readers forged in the

discovery of a common emotional struggle. Bechdel's memoir represents an autobiographical narrator's loving yet ambivalent relationship with her mother in ways that invite readers to acknowledge a shared affective history of complex mother-daughter relationships that merits public examination, empathy, and social inclusion. (TC)

71 **Bernhard Malkmus, "Man in the Anthropocene": Max Frisch's Environmental History**

The aesthetic practices in Max Frisch's late story *Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän* (*Man in the Holocene* [1979]) lend themselves to a reflection on the current global environmental crisis and its anthropological and epistemological repercussions. Frisch's visual and narrative artwork anticipates central issues in the current Anthropocene debate, in which the humanities have made incisive interventions. I bring these interventions to bear on close readings of Frisch's intermedia aesthetics, unearthing an environmental reflexivity that revolves around issues of time and history, place and identity, nature and human knowledge, metamorphosis and anthropogenic transformation. I thus invite us to reconsider in the light of the anthropological and sociopolitical imaginaries of the Anthropocene some ways in which the literature of the past half century has negotiated the relation between human beings and their natural environments. (BM)

86 **Anca Parvulescu, Reproduction and Queer Theory: Between Lee Edelman's *No Future* and J. M. Coetzee's *Slow Man***

In a queer-theory reading of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* in the 2004 polemic *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Lee Edelman relied on a narrow concept of reproduction as procreative heteronormativity anchored in heterosexual sex. He left untold the other story of reproduction: our daily reproduction in the service of capitalism. Marxist and materialist feminist theories of reproduction remind us that we all engage in reproductive work and that women have traditionally been considered natural providers of this work. A reading of J. M. Coetzee's *Slow Man*, in which a male protagonist depends on the domestic labor of a migrant woman, provides a counterpoint to *No Future*. (AP)

101 **Thomas C. Connolly, Primitive Passions, Blinding Visions: Arthur Rimbaud's "Mystique" and a Tradition of Mystical Ekphrasis**

In 1935 the Dutch scholar Johannes B. Tielrooy argued that Arthur Rimbaud's prose poem "Mystique" (c. 1872) was an ekphrasis, or literary description, of the central panel of Hubert and Jan van Eyck's altarpiece *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* (1432). Although this hypothesis was deemed credible for a number of years, it is now thought to be unlikely that the painting inspired the poem or that the poem is an instance of ekphrasis. However, Tielrooy's ekphrastic interpretation can still be used to reveal elements of the poem otherwise hidden to the reader. I demonstrate the potential of Tielrooy's speculative practice, what I call mystical ekphrasis, by juxtaposing Rimbaud's poem with a chromolithographic representation of one of Jean Fouquet's illuminations, with which the poem also has possible but not conclusive links. (TCC)

119 **Ray Horton, "Rituals of the Ordinary": Marilynne Robinson's Aesthetics of Belief and Finitude**

Marilynne Robinson, the author of *Housekeeping*, *Gilead*, *Home*, and *Lila*, has garnered attention for her sustained engagement with religious themes. Yet for all its robust participation in the theology of a distinctively Calvinist Protestantism, Robinson's fiction is invested in religious forms that are less propositional than phenomenological. It imagines belief as both a perceptual

background and a system of thought that activates concentrated aesthetic attention to quotidian moments of temporal contingency and worldly ephemerality. Consequently, Robinson's work intervenes in the burgeoning critical discourse surrounding religion and literature, offering an alternative to methodologies that prioritize the ontology of belief over the aesthetic modes of perception that belief makes available.