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Abstract. The MLA is a vital association whose aim is to maintain the study of languages and literatures as a necessary and basic component of our culture. Its evolution in the last few years, guided by the suggestions of the membership and implemented by the central MLA Headquarters' Executive Director and staff, corresponds to the evolution in our cultural and educational situation. But in 1975 the Association, whether as a whole or via its individual members, has not taken any effective stand to counteract the deleterious effects upon the profession of an economic and cultural regression that is threatening the future of humanistic study in schools and universities. An overall effort to counteract the present trend is indispensable. (GB)

Abstract. Since 1937, critics have been discovering integrated into the structure of literary works various numerological and symmetrical patterns. Lines, chapters, books, episodes, characters, images, etc. are found in symbolic numbers like 3, 4, 10, 33, etc. and in symmetrical arrangements (concentric, triadic, or parallel). Both were known in classical times, but nowhere in surviving classical theory is there explicit recognition of any large-scale use of number or pattern in literature; nor are there important references in modern critical writing before this century. Nevertheless, even though the esthetic relevance of highly complicated or esoteric number systems is doubtful, many symmetrical (often concentric) and numerological patterns have been convincingly demonstrated in works from the *Iliad* to the *Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost*, as well as in other poems and novels from the Renaissance to the present. But problems remain as to what can properly be measured and what validates the patterns detected. (RGP)

Abstract. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* not only exhibits a profound control of structure and symmetry, but also includes a great many techniques that induce disorientation and confusion in the reader. Such techniques challenge and entertain the audience, and themes of decline, decadence, and dismemberment comment ironically on *Sir Gawain*'s late fourteenth-century audience's place in the history that the narrative includes. This article concentrates on one particular technique; the poet divides certain stanzas so that the second half of the stanza causes the audience to revise or question their response to the first half. But such techniques mirror the effects of the narrative as a whole. This constant shift in perspective causes the audience to question the meaning and value of earthly perception and existence. It also indicates a gently antagonistic—or at least ironic—relationship between poet and audience. (JMG)

Abstract. Extensive studies of the sources for *Nature* (1836) have so far failed to note Emerson's discovery of a dramatic dialectical method in Coleridge's writings. Emerson's major ideas—self-reliance, the assimilative Soul, and compensation as balanced wholeness—had been worked out well before 1836; but the publication of these ideas was delayed until Emerson found and appropriated Coleridge's method. Emerson is found exploring Coleridge's precise formulations in 1835 while *Nature* was being planned. *Nature* itself is rigorously dialectical in content and form. Beginning with the dichotomy between soul and nature, the work proceeds through six major dialectical steps to a final synthesis, spirit. Individual chapters, too, proceed through as many as five distinct dialectical steps toward the major synthesis of the chapter. This method duplicates the central argument of the work; moreover, it carries through Coleridge's important linkage between dialectical logic and organic growth. (BW)

Abstract. Walther von der Vogelweide's "Sô die bluomen ûz dem grase dringent" is usually presented as an adaptation of a commonplace of *Minnesang*, the assertion that the joys inspired by a courtly lady are superior to those of spring. Such an interpretation accounts neither for Walther's detailed presentation of the comparison between nature and the lady nor for the apparent repetition of his theme in the final stanza. The poet's careful use of stylistic and thematic parallels, particularly similes derived from the medieval view of nature, transform the traditionally brief commonplace into a hierarchical conception of being which pervades the entire poem. Simultaneously, Walther's adaptation of his theme necessitates the "repetition," which self-consciously involves both his audience and the preceding stanzas in a further comparison, emphasizing the role of the poet in creating and perpetuating the fictions of *Minnesang* and its system of values. (AG)

Abstract. Much contemporary criticism presents the final speech of Pleberio in Fernando de Rojas' *La Celestina* as authorial philosophical pessimism. This view, based upon residual nineteenth-century critical habits, assumes what it claims to demonstrate. Pleberio and his dramatic world appear differently if we begin with the beginning, where other characters create roles for him in their private dramas, in contrast to his ineffective personal role. All the principal characters, Pleberio included, create their world and are created by it. They are united also by their common substitution of metaphors of commerce and exchange for the language of feelings and values. Pleberio the merchant and Celestina the bawd necessarily coexist in the system of *La Celestina*, as analysis of language and events makes clear. His final protest is an entrepreneur's confused desperation on facing the world he has made. The last words allude to a context ("Salve Regina") that reverses this world's reversals. (PND)

Abstract. The authors of eighteenth-century spiritual autobiographies and of their fictional imitations demonstrate the complex functions of imagination as a component of the spiritual life and of its records. *Robinson Crusoe* and William Cowper's *Memoir* (1816) both delineate detailed sequences of emotional and imaginative development as the foundation of religious experience. Crusoe progresses to self-understanding by recognizing and mastering his own fear and anger and developing his capacity for love and by enlarging the resources of his imagination. Cowper asserts that his conversion and the Christian fellowship that followed it dominate his experience, but his account, with dark imagistic undertones, may also be read as revealing the persistence of despair. The unconscious shaping which produces this counter-pattern enriches the memoir's implication. In novel and autobiography alike, the divergence between what the author asserts and what he suggests, reflecting varying possibilities of the imagination, can generate fruitful literary effects. (PMS)

Abstract. Critical difficulties with *Great Expectations* prompt a psychoanalytic approach and consideration of the literary use of Freudian concepts and of the complex relationship between Dickens and Pip, dreamer and dream. Edmund Wilson stressed biography and the trauma of the blacking warehouse. Freudian theory stresses infantile trauma of the sort the novel's first scene hints at: the death of brothers and parents. The intensity of Pip's ambivalence and of his guilt and self-abasement suggests that Pip's story projects and explores feelings of his creator. Many characters in the novel exhibit or parody Oedipal antagonisms. There are many father figures, deprived children, and allusions to patricide. Magwitch is the "father" Pip craves, the best giver and receiver of both punishment and forgiveness. Joe Gargery does not punish though Pip urges him to. Jaggers insists on neutrality. Magwitch fills Pip with excessive dread; his death, loving Pip and being loved by him, satisfies Pip's psychic needs. (LJD)

Abstract. J. Alfred Prufrock's pathetic admission—"It is impossible to say just what I mean!"—states a central theme of many of T. S. Eliot's works, which concern the frustrated struggle to achieve satisfactory expression. The poems are varied "raids on the inarticulate" ("East Coker") by the inarticulate. Their failure of speech leads, in many poems, to the shifting of verbal action to nonhuman agents—a process epitomized by the thunder's utterance, "DA," in *The Waste Land.* Given the weaknesses of language, the poems display a baffling world in which neither principles nor particulars can be expressed, so that poetry fails to work and, ultimately, ceases to matter. Among such inadequate words, Eliot concentrates, ironically or devoutly, on the paradox of the Incarnation expressed as the wordless Word. The end of Eliot's exploration is a vision of a condition of stillness, which poems can point to but never reach. (WH)

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Only members of the Association may submit articles to *PMLA*. Each article submitted will be sent to at least one consultant reader and one member of the Advisory Committee. If recommended by these readers it will then be sent to the members of the Editorial Board, who meet every three months to discuss such articles and assist the Editor in making final decisions.

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