

May 1974

PMILA

*Publications of the
Modern Language Association of America*

Volume 89

Number 3

PUBLISHED SIX TIMES A YEAR BY THE ASSOCIATION

The Modern Language Association of America

ORGANIZED 1883

INCORPORATED 1900

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1974

President: JOHN HURT FISHER, *University of Tennessee*
First Vice-President: GERMAINE BRÉE, *Wake Forest University*
Second Vice-President: NORTHROP FRYE, *University of Toronto*
Executive Secretary and Treasurer: WILLIAM D. SCHAEFER

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

For the term ending 31 December 1974

CLAUDIO GUILLÉN, *Univ. of California, San Diego*
MARGARET MCKENZIE, *Vassar Coll.*
ROBERTA SALPER, *State Univ. of New York, Old Westbury*

For the term ending 31 December 1975

JOHN C. GERBER, *Univ. of Iowa*
OLGA M. RAGUSA, *Columbia Univ.*
HELEN HENNESSY VENDLER, *Boston Univ.*

For the term ending 31 December 1976

WAYNE C. BOOTH, *Univ. of Chicago*
GENEVÈVE DELATTRE, *Univ. of California, Santa Barbara*
JOAN WEBBER, *Univ. of Washington*

For the term ending 31 December 1977

MARY ANN CAWS, *Hunter Coll. of the City Univ. of New York*
STANLEY B. GREENFIELD, *Univ. of Oregon*
KATHLEEN WILLIAMS, *Univ. of California, Riverside*

TRUSTEES OF INVESTED FUNDS

GORDON N. RAY, *Guggenheim Foundation, Managing Trustee*
FREDERICK BURKHARDT, *American Council of Learned Societies*
C. WALLER BARRETT, *Charlottesville, Va.*

PMLA 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 \$25 except for the following special categories: (a) student membership at \$7, open for a maximum of four years to graduate students who are engaged primarily in a course of study leading to a degree and who do not hold full-time teaching appointments; (b) joint husband-and-wife membership at \$35 with only one subscription to *PMLA*; (c) foreign membership at \$18, open to resident citizens of countries other than the United States and Canada.

The subscription price of *PMLA* for libraries and other institutions is \$25. A subscription including a bound volume at the end of the year is \$40, domestic and foreign. Agents deduct 10% as their fee. Single copies of the January, March, May, October, and November Program issues may be obtained for \$5 each; the September Directory for \$6.

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., 16 East 46th St., New York 10017. Early and current volumes may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich. 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, N. Y. 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 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, N. Y., and at additional mailing office.
Copyright © 1974 by The Modern Language Association of America.
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 12-32040.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY THE GEORGE BANTA COMPANY, INC., MENASHIA, WISCONSIN

Contents · May

Literacy and Literature. FLORENCE HOWE 433

Abstract. In a period of few jobs, low morale, and powerlessness, teachers of English and modern languages—at all levels from elementary through graduate school—need to re-examine the value of their work. Central to understanding the crisis of the profession is the historical separation of the study of literature from the teaching of literacy. The separation rationalizes the profession's hierarchy and defines its practice in the classroom. Thus literature becomes a luxury and the teaching of skills empty of literary power. That our curriculum needs revision follows quite naturally, moreover, from the knowledge that more than 70% of our undergraduate majors are women and from the evidence that the curriculum from elementary school on is male-biased and thus distinctly harmful to at least half the population. Whether we choose to renew our responsibility for teaching meaningful literacy, or to work cooperatively as literature teachers within interdisciplinary programs, we will also need to reevaluate and change the canon of literary study, especially to include those who have been traditionally bypassed: women, minorities of both sexes, and working-class people. For all these, literature and literacy can provide courage and skills necessary for survival and growth. (FH)

Schiller's *Fiesco*—A Republican Tragedy? REGINALD H. PHELPS 442

Abstract. Schiller's subtitle, "Ein republikanisches Trauerspiel," creates serious difficulties of interpretation. His four principal historical sources give little basis for regarding the conspirators or the conspiracy as "republican" in the sense of "antimonarchical." The play itself likewise disregards the republican motif. A study of the vocabulary shows that such politically emotional words as *Republik*, *Freiheit*, *Bürger*, *Volk* are infrequently used and are likely to bear a neutral or negative-ironic meaning. Schiller's two later versions, the Mannheim stage version and the Leipzig/Dresden manuscript, show no conspicuous change in his use of such terms. The play belongs rather among contemporary dramas generalizing about freedom than to the category of sociopolitical *Tendenzdrama*, and concerns *Republik* in the older sense of *res publica* rather than in the modern meaning. Not Rousseau, but Plutarch as translated by G. B. von Schirach, most strongly influenced Schiller in theme, incidents, traits of character, and perhaps political attitude. The play appears as a conflict among three strong personalities—Fiesco, Verrina, and Andreas Doria—for power within the state; and Doria, representing the essence of the state, may be the real "hero." (RHP)

The Franklin's Tale: Chaucer or the Critics. GERTRUDE M. WHITE 454

Abstract. The Franklin's Tale, which has caused much disagreement among critics of Chaucer, may best be understood in the light of Chaucer's own writings, particularly The Merchant's Tale and three short lyrics, "Truth," "Gentillesse," and "Lak of Steadfastnesse." The relationship between the characters and events of the two Tales dramatizes a moral ideal that operates throughout *The Canterbury Tales* and is given explicit expression in the lyrics. It may be summed up as "gentillesse," which consists, in the Knight's words, of "Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie." In a variety of contexts, this standard operates throughout Chaucer's writings. An understanding of it puts The Franklin's Tale into clear perspective, identifies its true theme, answers its critics, accounts for its apparent absurdities, inconsistencies, and contradictions, and reveals its suitability to its teller. (GMW)

The Metamorphoses of Moria: Structure and Meaning in *The Praise of Folly*. WAYNE A. REBHORN 463

Abstract. Following Moria's metamorphoses, Erasmus' *Praise* falls into three sections whose interrelationships generate the total meaning of the work. Moving from section to section, Folly leads her auditors through a dialectic of conversion. At first ironic, Folly is the goddess of metamorphosis, a variant of Circe, offering men her gift of pleasurable illusion. She wants them to accept life as a comic play and attacks the "Stoic" for at-

tempting self-divinization while rejecting the play of life. She argues that her power can make men happy in Plato's cave. But in the satirical middle section, Folly betrays them by showing them the real tragedy of their lot. While revealing that one cannot separate life-preserving, pleasurable folly from destructive madness, by her transformation into a "Stoic" truth-teller, Folly prevents men from placing their faith in her benevolence. Thus, in the final section, she turns with them to Christian folly, the faith that leads men out of Plato's cave to God's unchanging, benevolent reality. Folly's final, ecstatic vision gives her followers a transcendent perspective redefining and including the comitragic visions of the first two sections. (WAR)

"I Know My Course": Hamlet's Confidence. HAROLD SKULSKY 477

Abstract. At the outset, Hamlet remarks on the futility of attempting to guess at his state of mind by appeal to the *notatio*, or standard behavioral model, favored by the science of physiognomy. Although the possibility of knowing other minds is provided for by Renaissance theory of natural law and by certain tenets of Neoplatonism, Hamlet's initial skepticism is in full accord with the weight of received opinion—e.g., with folk wisdom, orthodox theological authority, and traditional reservations about friendship and self-knowledge. The deceptiveness of *notatio*, moreover, is illustrated in the play by the hubris of Polonius' art of espionage and by the bitter testimony of Claudius to his success as a dissembler. In practice, however, both Claudius and Hamlet rely with no less confidence than Polonius on the possibility of reading the inner by the outer man. Though Hamlet is sustained in this confidence by a hopeful theory of histrionic performance, a scholar's habits of observation, a flair for satirical portraiture, and even a few trivial successes, the treachery of *notatio* is ominously revealed, along with the Polonian arrogance of relying on it, in his encounter with Gertrude, and especially in his conception of how the "Mouse-trap" can be sprung. (HS)

The Movement of History in *Our Mutual Friend*. WILLIAM J. PALMER 487

Abstract. Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* is an existential novel dealing with the struggles of the central characters to place, in Sartrean terms, existence before essence. This theme of self-definition involves characters singularly preoccupied with analyzing the deadness of past history and with rejecting the impositions of the past upon the present and the future. Boffin's historical reading and Lizzie Hexam's visions in the symbolic fire both reveal the necessity of change if there is to be an existential future. The main protagonist, Eugene Wrayburn, faced with the Shakespearean-Sartrean decision of whether or not to be in his sexual relationship with Lizzie, chooses to reject the pornographic clichés of Victorian sexuality and establish an existence for himself outside of the atrophied "Society" of the novel. Because of these decisions by the central characters to reject the dead history of the past, *Our Mutual Friend* is an optimistic statement of Dickens' belief in the power of the individual to regenerate a dead world. (WJP)

Form, Tradition, and Consolation in Hardy's "Poems of 1912–13." WILLIAM W. MORGAN 496

Abstract. Hardy's "Poems of 1912–13" constitute a formal elegy over his first wife, Emma. The twenty-one lyrics are thematically unified, and the sequence is given overall form and structure by the persona's organized perception of time. Within the sequence the narrator focuses upon time periods in the following order: *recent past, present*; then *distant past, recent past, present*. This five-part temporal model serves as the form of the elegy, a form that it is likely Hardy worked consciously to achieve. It is also likely that he wrote this sequence in full consciousness of the great elegies preceding his, for he adapted many of the conventions of the elegiac tradition to his own artistic needs. The traditional consolation of perpetuity outside time and space, however, he denied, and for it he substituted the consolation of full emotional and intellectual comprehension of the couple's experience together. This limited consolation, based upon the persona's organized perception of time, is the logic of grief for Hardy's godless universe. (WWM)

Circumscription of Space and the Form of Poe's *Arthur Gordon Pym*. ROBERT L. CARRINGER 506

Abstract. Circumscription of space is a fundamental and necessary feature of Poe's fictional universe of negative possibility. That his characters are almost always narrowly circumscribed suggests their severely limited prospects and interests. Diminished space also represents withdrawal into self, and Poe's centers of diminished space often contain symbols of that destructive core of the inner self which continually threatens the moral and rational being of the Poe protagonist. In undertaking *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, Poe was committing himself uncharacteristically not only to the representation of movement in space but also to an objective mode of development, outward and ongoing testing and discovery of self in the infinite possibilities of space. The curious form of *Arthur Gordon Pym* is the result not so much of careless incompetence (as recent scholarship has suggested) as of a fundamental conflict between psychological inclination and the formal requirements of an unfamiliar genre. But this work is of special interest, since *Arthur Gordon Pym* is a first effort in an important line of experimentation in American fiction, the transformation of an undistinguished form, the sea narrative, into a vehicle of major literature. (RLC)

The Conclusion of Richard Wright's *Native Son*. PAUL N. SIEGEL 517

Abstract. Both Max's courtroom speech in Richard Wright's *Native Son* and his final scene with Bigger have been grievously misunderstood. The numerous critics of the novel have regarded Max's speech as a Communist "party-line oration" whose propaganda is poorly related to the rest of the book. Rather, Max seeks desperately to avert the cataclysmic end toward which he sees American society heading by striving to have wrongs redressed. Bigger, however, finds a meaning in his life by accepting his feelings of hate. This is not a defeat for him, as critics have asserted. Hatred of the oppressor is a natural, human emotion which, used as the motor power of an idea driving toward a goal, can transform both the individual and society. As Max says, "The job in getting people to fight and have faith is in making them believe in what life has made them feel. . . ." This is the belief Bigger finally acquires. With this belief comes a sense of comradeship with those whites such as Jan who have earned such comradeship in action. (PNS)

Figaro's Games. WALTER E. REX 524

Abstract. Whereas literary sources and theatrical conventions such as the unities are quite important for the appreciation of Beaumarchais's *Barbier de Séville* and *La Mère coupable*, they prove curiously unhelpful when trying to approach the unique qualities of *Le Mariage de Figaro*. The special ambience of this play is related not to ordinary literary traditions, but to the separate category of children's games. From Chérubin's hide-and-seek in Act I to the grand game of blindman's buff in Act V, these are what give the action of the play its unity and also create the special quality of the fun in the play. Because of the time of life these games imply (i.e., childhood), there is also a special quality to the play's revolutionary overtones. Thus, in many senses, the end of the play represents the ushering in of a new age. (WER)

The Paradise Setting of Chateaubriand's *Atala*. DENNIS J. SPININGER 530

Abstract. The landscape description of the New World that begins Chateaubriand's *Atala* has suffered from misguided criticism. Hostile critics have approached it "scientifically," denying the authenticity of its details; admirers have rarely offered more than a theory of exoticism. Neither of these approaches uncovers the governing analogy that shaped the landscape details: the setting of *Atala* as an approximate paradise. The New World is "le nouvel Éden," adapted to a tradition of garden paradises, particularly that of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. While recalling its mythical model, however, the features of Chateaubriand's landscape simultaneously and ironically suggest a fallen condition by presenting dualities in a state of tension. This ambivalence sets up a double relationship to the paradisiacal theme treated in the novel. The terrestrial paradise is recalled as the appropriate setting for another Fall. The conflicting properties of the symbolic locale do *not* achieve the expected

synthesis and the story of the ill-fated lovers parallels the mythical Fall analogue. The emphasis then shifts to the celestial paradise, the religious (and Romantic) reconciliation of opposites. This remains tentative, however, for the final image of the novel is of the "new Eden" deprived of its sacred context rife with dualities. (DJS)

The Representation of Visual Reality in *Perceval* and *Parzival*.
ANNEMARIE E. MAHLER 537

Abstract. The image projected in the reader's mind by an author's description offers a basis for comparison with the visual arts. Art historical criteria are applied to equivalent descriptions—a portrait, an architectural complex, and a scene involving motion—in the *Perceval* of Chrestien de Troyes and the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach. Chrestien's traditional rhetorical portrait of Blancheflor is a still, frontal, symmetrical image; his description of *chastel merveile* gives meticulous surface detail but instead of a logical spatial connection the parts are simply juxtaposed in the plane; Gavain's fight with the lion shows no real motion but breaks down into a series of still vignettes which represent rather than show the action. On the other hand, Wolfram's portrait of Condwiramurs is glimpsed from various angles and distances as she moves through space; *Schastel Marveile* is vaguely described but spatially self-consistent; motion in Gawan's lion fight is continuous in both space and time. Thus Chrestien's descriptions relate to the dominant tradition of medieval art which shows figures and objects in characteristic poses or arrangements outlined in the plane, Wolfram's to that uncommon strain which attempts to cope with natural relationships, particularly those of volumes in space. (AEM)

Reformation Attitudes toward Allegory and the Song of Songs.
GEORGE L. SCHEPER 551

Abstract. Common generalizations about Reformation attitudes toward allegory are based on polemical denunciations by reformers of medieval "dialectical" exegesis. But Reformation definitions of the senses of Scripture are basically in accord with the definitions of medieval theologians. The reformers' attempts to draw a radical distinction between typology and allegory never succeeded and Reformation commentaries continued to allegorize, as demonstrated in the numerous Protestant commentaries on the Song of Songs. The crucial difference between medieval and Protestant spirituality in the Song commentaries lies not in their attitude toward allegory but in their conception of the nuptial metaphor, wherein human love symbolizes the love between God and man. Some Protestant commentators deny there is any reference to carnal love at all; those that do not, regard the metaphor as too dangerous for explication. Generally, they see that the aptness of the metaphor lies in the moral, domestic virtues of the marriage contract. In contrast, the mystical tradition of the Song, epitomized in Bernard, sees that the metaphor's aptness lies precisely in the passionate nature of the sexual union: it is the union of two in one flesh that is the most perfect symbol of the love of God. (GLS)

The Lyric Present: Simple Present Verbs in English Poems.
GEORGE T. WRIGHT 563

Abstract. Poets writing in English frequently use the simple present form of action verbs where the progressive form would be more natural in speech. Probably they do so in order to take advantage of overtones resident in the simple form, overtones that permit a physical action to seem timeless yet permanent, pastlike yet edging toward the future, repeatable yet provisional, urgent yet distant, ceremonious and archaic. Never quite a stage direction, and different in feeling even from temporally unlocated past tense verbs, the action verb cast in the lyric present tense serves every epoch of English literary history differently but is always expressive of the poets' deepest perceptions and fears. An appendix reports and comments on an extensive survey of the frequency with which British and American poets have used progressive forms. (GTW)

Forum 580

Report of the Executive Secretary 587

Report of the Treasurer 592

Forthcoming Meetings and Conferences of General Interest 598

Professional Notes and Comment 602

History of a History: A Study in Cooperative Scholarship.
 ROBERT E. SPILLER 602

Abstract. From its founding in 1921, the American Literature Group, MLA, was committed to a history of American literature as expression of an evolving American culture. From Parrington's determinism and Foerster's humanism, it developed the theory that our culture was transplanted mainly from Western Europe, but was indigenous as shaped by a moving frontier. In 1938, a committee was appointed to plan a cooperative literary history, but by 1940 conservative elements cautioned delay. The project then split. The Group undertook long-term fact-finding while historical reinterpretation was taken over by fifty-five historians and critics, selected and guided by a self-appointed editorial board of four: Spiller, Thorp, Johnson, Canby. *Literary History of the United States* was first published in 1948 and is now in its fourth edition. This article reconstructs the theory and history of this unique experiment in cooperative scholarship from documents in the Universities of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. (RES)

PMILA

PUBLICATIONS OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Published Six Times a Year

Indices: Vols. 1–50, 1935; 51–60, 1945; 51–79, 1964

EDITORIAL BOARD

ERIC A. BLACKALL
Cornell University

MARCEL MARC GUTWIRTH
Haverford College

GEOFFREY H. HARTMAN
Yale University

JAMES E. MILLER, JR.
University of Chicago

BRUCE W. WARDROPPER
Duke University

KATHLEEN M. WILLIAMS
University of California, Riverside

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DAVID M. BEVINGTON, 1974
University of Chicago

HAROLD BLOOM, 1977
Yale University

A. DWIGHT CULLER, 1974
Yale University

VICTOR ERLICH, 1974
Yale University

STANLEY EUGENE FISH, 1977
University of California, Berkeley

STANLEY B. GREENFIELD, 1975
University of Oregon

JUDD D. HUBERT, 1976
University of California, Irvine

JAMES R. KINCAID, 1977
Ohio State University

J. MITCHELL MORSE, 1974
Temple University

WILLIAM G. MOULTON, 1975
Princeton University

STEPHEN G. NICHOLS, JR., 1974
Dartmouth College

PAUL R. OLSON, 1974
Johns Hopkins University

SHERMAN PAUL, 1977
University of Iowa

RONALD H. PAULSON, 1977
Johns Hopkins University

ALLEN W. PHILLIPS, 1976
University of Texas

NATHALIA WRIGHT, 1975
University of Tennessee

THEODORE J. ZIOLKOWSKI, 1975
Princeton University

Editor: WILLIAM D. SCHAEFER

Assistant Editor: JUDY GOULDING

Promotion and Production Manager:

JUDITH LAPIDUS

Editorial Assistant: JEAN PARK

Senior Editorial Assistant: MARGOT RABINER

Administrative Assistant: IRENE ZWERLING

A STATEMENT OF EDITORIAL POLICY*

PMLA publishes articles on the modern languages and literatures that are of significant interest to the entire membership of the Association. Articles should therefore normally: (1) employ a widely applicable approach or methodology; or (2) use an interdisciplinary approach of importance to the interpretation of literature; or (3) treat a broad subject or theme; or (4) treat a major author or work; or (5) discuss a minor author or work in such a way as to bring insight to a major author, work, genre, period, or critical method.

Any member of the Association may submit papers to *PMLA*. Each paper submitted will be sent to at least one consultant reader and one member of the Advisory Committee. If recommended by these readers, it will be forwarded to the Editor and the Editorial Board for final decision.

PMLA does not normally publish articles of fewer than 2,500 or more than 12,500 words. Articles submitted should be well written and accompanied by an abstract on the standard form obtainable from the Editor.

Manuscripts, prepared according to the second edition of the *MLA Style Sheet*, should be addressed to the Editor of *PMLA*, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011. Only the original is needed by the editorial staff, but a copy should be retained by the author.

* New Editorial Policy, to which papers submitted after 1 March 1973 must adhere. Papers appearing in the current issue continue to reflect the former policy, for which see any issue prior to March 1973.