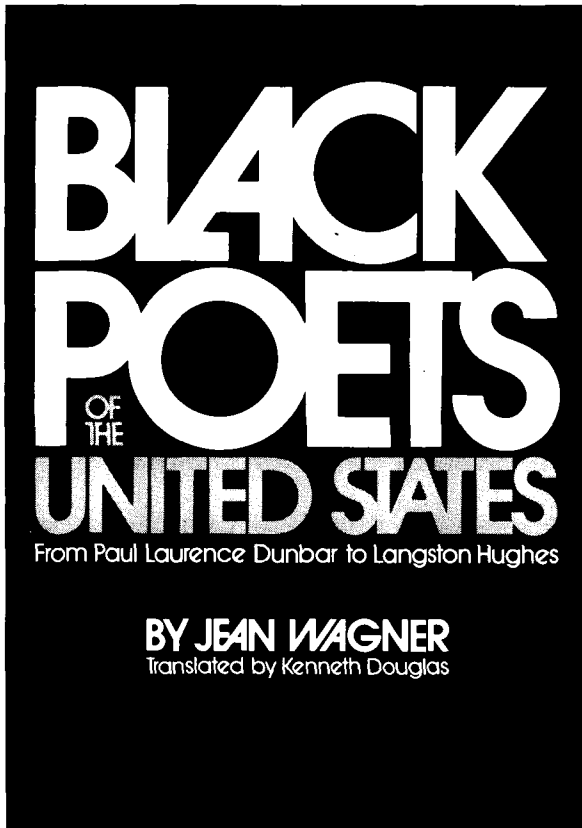


PMLA

Volume 88
Number 1

*Publications of the
Modern Language Association
of America*

January 1973



Wagner has brought to bear on this long-overdue venture all the literary insight, intellectual acumen, poetic sensitivity, and thoroughness so characteristic of the French scholar.

Phylon

...à monumental work... the first comprehensive study of my poetry yet put down on paper.

LANGSTON HUGHES

[The book] is a product of the best traditions of European scholarship. Thorough and comprehensive, it reflects painstaking research, encyclopedic knowledge of its subject, and Olympian determination to view that subject in its largest possible perspective.

ROBERT BONE, in the Foreword

The only full-length study of the major black poets of the United States from early slavery times to Langston Hughes is now available in English. First published in France in 1963, the book is, in the words of Robert Bone, "a seminal work not likely soon to be replaced as the standard treatment of its field."

Wagner analyzes the impact of slavery on the black psyche and on the patterns of religious feeling, discusses the evolution of black lyrical expression to the end of the nineteenth century, then focuses on Dunbar and his contemporaries, emphasizing their struggle with stereotypes stemming from minstrelsy, popular song, and southern white writing. The heart of the book examines the major figures of the Negro Renaissance: Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Sterling Brown. Minor poets are also discussed. An updated bibliography by Keneth Kinnamon is included.

580 pages. \$15.00; paper, \$5.50



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS Urbana Chicago London

January 1973

PMMLA

*Publications of the
Modern Language Association of America*

Volume 88

Number 1

PUBLISHED SIX TIMES A YEAR BY THE ASSOCIATION

The Modern Language Association of America

ORGANIZED 1883

INCORPORATED 1900

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

For the term ending 31 December 1973

J. HILLIS MILLER, *Yale Univ.*

WALTER B. RIDEOUT, *Univ. of Wisconsin*

PAUL SCHACH, *Univ. of Nebraska*

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.*

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. Annual dues for membership in the Association, which includes subscription to *PMLA*, are \$25 except for the following special categories: (a) student membership at \$7, open for a maximum of four years to those 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 \$20. Agents deduct \$2 as their fee. A subscription including a bound volume at the end of the year is \$35, domestic and foreign. 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 Materials 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.: 212 691-3200

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 © 1973 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., MENASHA, WISCONSIN

Contents · January

- The Historical Importance of Assonance to Poets. PERCY G. ADAMS 8

Abstract. Assonance—the repetition of a vowel sound in stressed syllables near enough to affect the ear—has been as important as alliteration. Such vowel echoes have been employed in three chief ways. They have been simply harmonious, as in Swift’s “So rotting Celia strols the street / When sober folks are all in bed,” where the echo of [i] and [o] may be more pleasing to the ear than the two alliterations. Assonance has been used for structural effects and for emphasis: it has bound adjective to noun, from *Beowulf*’s “ēowra lēode”—a popular formula—to Thomas’ title “The White Giant’s Thigh”; it has bound the lines of a couplet, as in Spenser’s “All in a vele of silke and silver thin / That hid no whit her alablastar skin”; it can emphasize rhythmical stresses, as in Shakespeare’s “Do I delight to die, or life desire”; it can emphasize rhetorically balancing words, the names in Butler’s “Didst inspire Witers, Prin, and Vickears,” or the verbs in Dr. Johnson’s zeugma “No dangers fright him and no labors tire.” Assonance can also be onomatopoeic when it repeats the vowel of a key word, as in Pope’s “Now pleasing sleep had seal’d each mortal eye; / Stretch’d in their tents the Grecian leaders lie.” (PGA)

- Exorcising the Beast: Attempts at Rationality in French Classicism. ERICA HARTH 19

Abstract. French classical literature betrays not the reason by which it is usually characterized, but a largely unsuccessful striving for rational control of the irrational. The literary treatments of the beast and monster in seventeenth-century works indicate both the power of the irrational and the similarity of various authors’ responses to it. Descartes’s beast-machine theory and Pascal’s adaptation of it represent efforts to mechanize and regulate unreason. The failure of this attempt in Pascal’s *Pensées* is signaled by the “monster,” an expression of that incomprehensibility which compels human reason to abdicate. The monster in Racine’s *Phèdre* is an irrational force which the protagonists dream of conquering, but by which they themselves are finally conquered. Continued belief that French classicism flourished in an “age of reason” is in effect a prolongation of the same illusion found in the literature of that time. (EH)

- Proust and the New Novel in France. E. ZANTS 25

Abstract. All of the characteristics of the New Novel can be found in Proust: a search for an unknown reality, participated in by the reader whose vision of the world is thereby transformed. The unknown reality consists of ordinary events juxtaposed in such a way that they reveal a new truth or reality to the reader. The characters habitually misunderstand one another; the impossibility of really knowing anyone else makes solitude an inherent state of each character, so that any attempt at possession is necessarily absurd. The New Novelist, therefore, tries to grasp the form of society as a whole rather than to describe the life of one individual. This results in a presentation of existences rather than essences. (EZ)

- Le Feu follet*: The Drug Addict as a Tragic Hero. ALLEN THIERER 34

Abstract. Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, like Malraux and other French writers of the nineteen thirties, saw the forces of history as a form of tragic fate. In *Le Feu follet* he sets forth the tragic destiny of a decadent drug addict who is a victim of his era’s decline. Drieu’s use of a Racinian structure creates a sense of overwhelming tragic inevitability, but, in the final analysis, his attempt at creating a tragedy based on the decadent’s self-destruction is not entirely successful. Rather, the novel appears as an inversion of tragedy in which the glorification of nonbeing foreshadows Drieu’s adherence to fascism. (AT)

- Samuel Beckett: The Flight from Self. ETHEL F. CORNWELL . 41

Abstract. Recognizing the existential necessity for self-creation, but unable to unify mind and body, or to bear the burden of consciousness, the Beckett hero retreats from himself.

His life becomes one long attempt to reverse the process of birth and speed his return to the pre-conscious state from which he emerged. And it is always the same hero, always the same story. In *Murphy*, Beckett defines the three zones of consciousness, the mental regions to which his later heroes retreat. What his prose fiction offers is a steady regression from the first zone to the third, beginning with *Murphy*, then *Three Novels, Stories and Texts for Nothing*, and *How It Is*. Eventually, the Beckett hero finds himself trapped in an inner corner which he can escape only through insanity or death. Unable to accept either, he passes the time inventing stories, hiding behind his characters, waiting for release from his unbearable, "unmakeable" self. (EFC)

Science in Mann's *Zauberberg*: The Concept of Space. RUDI PRUSOK 52

Abstract. *Der Zauberberg* contains a great deal of esoteric scientific information that is woven into its symbolic structure, making the novel only partially comprehensible without some knowledge of twentieth-century science. Old concepts are no longer relevant by themselves, but must be fitted into a new *Weltanschauung* with its new scientific terminology. Mann used the new scientific information as symbol and leitmotif, updated old myths, and created new ones out of the continually accumulating data of the sciences. His novel has characteristics of a scientific experiment, allowing an Everyman Castorp to develop in the controlled parameters of the Berghof microcosm. This development entails a reconsideration of the nature of man in the light of Einstein's Relativity Theory and modern medicine. The former brings about a new perspective by shrugging off the old absolutes of Euclidian space and linear time and thereby adopting a "higher dimensionality" of perception from that of the "flatland" dweller. The latter, medicine and psychology, redefine man in medical terms and reexamine the Romantic myth of genius springing from disease. (RP)

Spenser's Wanton Maidens: Reader Psychology and the Bower of Bliss. ARLENE N. OKERLUND 62

Abstract. In creating an evil Bower of Bliss which is imaginatively more appealing than its good counterparts in "The Legend of Temperance," Spenser shapes his poetics to expose the reader's own status regarding the virtue of temperance. The first eleven cantos of Book II presumably provide an education in properly temperate behavior, until the beauty of the Bower suddenly reveals that the reader prefers the seductive attractions of the wanton maidens and the leisurely raptures of Acrasia's bed of roses to the moderation and rationality of Alma's House of Temperance. As the reader responds to the descriptions of Acrasia's garden, he shows how easily he can be seduced by the apparent beauties of earthly bliss—even though he knows the consequences of such intemperate actions. In the Bower of Bliss, the reader discovers that knowledge of evil and declared preferences for abstract virtue offer no protection against temptation. Through his response to the poetry, he finds himself in an embarrassing confrontation with his human nature. (ANO)

Eve and the Doctrine of Responsibility in *Paradise Lost*. STELLA P. REVARD 69

Abstract. Critics have argued that Adam in Book IX of *Paradise Lost* is responsible for Eve's fall in that he permitted her to go forth alone on the fatal morning. This view of indirect responsibility may not be consonant, however, with Milton's doctrine of individual responsibility enunciated elsewhere in the poem. Neither God in Book III, Raphael in Books V–VIII, nor the Son in Book X implies that Adam's headship over Eve requires that he control absolutely his wife's actions. If his function as husband was not to restrain Eve, then he can hardly be found delinquent for not having done so. Eve, though inferior to Adam, should not be thought incomplete without him and thereby unable to bear the responsibility of resisting Satan alone. Eve's intellectual inferiority does not make her more susceptible to sin, for Milton has shown repeatedly in *Paradise Lost* that nothing in a creature's innate being predisposes him to sin and that, moreover, it is not intellectual prowess which enables a creature to repulse sin, but love and allegiance to God. Thus, each creature is responsible individually for his own obedience. It is incompatible with the meaning of the entire poem to suppose that Eve was only conditionally responsible to God and therefore, when separated from Adam, unable to succeed against Satan. (SPR)

Richardson's *Pamela*: An Interpretation. Stuart Wilson 79

Abstract. The heroine of Richardson's first novel is neither a meretricious young hussy nor a paragon of virtue; she is a complex personality who moves from a naïve adolescence to a composed maturity in the course of the narrative. The conflict between her devotion to moral principle and her growing affection for Mr. B., which develops in the first, or Bedfordshire, section of the novel, brings a near-psychic collapse in the second, or Lincolnshire, section. The imagery and symbolism show the nature of her torments, her growing awareness of a love that combines *eros* and *agape*, and her need for the reconciliation between conscience and libido which is completed after her return to the Bedfordshire estate in the third section. The formal symmetry of the novel evolves from the narrative process within which Pamela is tested and proved capable of an honest love and a tranquil marriage. (SW)

Alice's Invasion of Wonderland. JAMES R. KINCAID 92

Abstract. By rejecting Wonderland and the world behind the Looking-Glass, Alice is rejecting not only the horrifying chaos of meaninglessness but the liberating chaos of comedy as well. Thus, the tone of the Alice books is ambivalent in relation to the protagonist. Insofar as Alice suggests a child taking a well-earned revenge on adult silliness or defeating the anarchy of the subconscious, she is supported. But she just as often appears either as an insensitive child, rudely attacking the gentle and the kindly, or simply as a human being, deeply corrupted by her obsession with nothingness, predation, and death. The presence of almost uncontrolled hostility in the Alice books has been noted, but the fact that this malice is often directed at Alice has not. And it is just this tonal ambivalence which makes these books so baffling and complex. (JRK)

Radical Utterances from the Soul's Abysms: Toward a New Sense of Whitman. STEPHEN A. BLACK 100

Abstract. Contrary to widely accepted arguments, Whitman's poems did not resolve the unconscious conflicts from which they sprang; nor did they indicate the resolution of philosophical questions or psychological conflicts. Neither should they be judged according to their success or failure in such analogical pursuits. Instead they must be judged according to the honesty and courage with which Whitman confronted the chaos within himself and according to the amount and quality of poetic order with which he was able to express the chaos within. If seen in a psychoanalytic context, Whitman's mystical or transcendental moments—moments of apparent attunement with the universe—are wishful assertions, comparable to psychological catharsis—"catharsis" being an experience which gives the illusion that conflicts are resolved when in fact they are not. There is bibliographical and biographical evidence in support of these arguments, but the strongest evidence comes from the literary analysis of such exemplary poems as "Clef Poem," "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," "There Was a Child Went Forth," and "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." (SAB)

The Financier Himself: Dreiser and C. T. Yerkes. PHILIP L. GERBER 112

Abstract. In his *Trilogy of Desire*, Theodore Dreiser presented a virtual biography of the model (Charles T. Yerkes, Jr.) for his central character (Frank A. Cowperwood). Dreiser's connection with Yerkes dated from the 1880's in Chicago, continued through the 1890's when both men moved to New York, and extended past 1905, when Yerkes died, and 1910, when *The Financier* was begun. Yerkes, a man of many facets, was selected by Dreiser as model for the generic millionaire principally because the dissolution of his estate after 1905 demonstrated Dreiser's theory of the natural "Equation Inevitable" in action. The events portrayed in *The Financier*, *The Titan*, and *The Stoic* followed verbatim the events of Yerkes' life as established in Dreiser's working notes and verified by newspapers, periodicals, and books of the era. In this central fictional figure also is found a clear, though submerged, portrait of Dreiser's own hopes and desires. (PLG)

The Transition from <i>Harmonium</i> : Factors in the Development of Stevens' Later Poetry. FRANK DOGGETT	122
<p>Abstract. Stevens' literary correspondence discloses some of the factors that determine the character of his later poetry. These formative elements are his changing concept of the ideal nature of poetry, his habits of work, his tendency to think inductively. Before 1930 Stevens was an advocate of the doctrine of "pure poetry," but later became interested in the function of thought in poetry. Answering the questions of his critics, he pondered the significance of images and figures in his poems. His discussion of some of these figures shows an inherent tendency to expand them into universals. The pressure of business limited the amount of time Stevens felt he could devote to a poem. He did not build his poems from verbal elements or textual modification. He created from a preliminary meditation and depended for wording on his genius for improvisation. The meditations out of which his poems emerged could be more or less philosophical, or as slight as the evocation of a sense of place. Whatever thought prompted a poem Stevens wished that poem to be a complete idiomatic expression of it. (FD)</p>	
<i>Forum</i>	132
<i>Forthcoming Meetings and Conferences of General Interest</i>	146
<i>Professional Notes and Comment</i>	150

PMLA

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 COMMITTEE

DAVID M. BEVINGTON, 1974
University of Chicago

A. DWIGHT CULLER, 1974
Yale University

RICHARD ELLMANN, 1973
Oxford University

VICTOR ERLICH, 1974
Yale University

DONALD J. GREENE, 1973
University of Southern California

STANLEY B. GREENFIELD, 1975
University of Oregon

JUDD D. HUBERT, 1976
University of California, Irvine

CECIL Y. LANG, 1973
University of Virginia

JAMES E. MILLER, JR., 1973
University of Chicago

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

ALLEN W. PHILLIPS, 1976
University of Texas

EARL R. WASSERMAN, 1975
Johns Hopkins University

KATHLEEN WILLIAMS, 1975
University of California, Riverside

NATHALIA WRIGHT, 1975
University of Tennessee

THEODORE J. ZIOLKOWSKI, 1975
Princeton University

Editor: WILLIAM DAVID SCHAEFER

Managing Editor: WILLIAM PELL

Assistant Editor: JUDY GOULDING

Advertising Coordinator: JUDITH LAPIDUS

Editorial Assistant: MARGOT RABINER

A STATEMENT OF EDITORIAL POLICY

PMLA endeavors to present distinguished contemporary scholarship and criticism in all fields of the modern languages and literatures. The distribution of papers should reflect the work actually being done from year to year, regardless of periods or languages. Members who feel their interests neglected by this policy are urged to write and to encourage others to write publishable articles.

PMLA welcomes either new or traditional approaches by either young or established scholars. It urges authors to bear in mind that their audience is the entire membership of the Association and to strive to communicate the broader implications as well as the precise substance of their research. Articles should be written in a clear, concise, and attractive style, with documentation held to a minimum. *PMLA* does not encourage notes or long articles; it does not review books.

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 Editorial Committee. An abstract in English on the standard form must accompany every article submitted. Abstract forms and guidelines may be obtained from the Editor.

Manuscripts, prepared in conformity with the second edition of the *MLA Style Sheet*, should be addressed to the Editor of *PMLA*, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10011. Copies are not needed, but should be made and retained by the author. Pamphlets *On the Publication of Research* and *On the Publication of Academic Writing* may be purchased from the MLA Materials Center.