

## Abstracts

531 **Christian Thorne**, Thumbing Our Nose at the Public Sphere: Satire, the Market, and the Invention of Literature

This article identifies a major contradiction in Jürgen Habermas's theory of the emergent public sphere. In his account, Habermas gives pride of place to Swift and his fellow Tory satirists. Their assault on the Whig oligarchy, he suggests, is emblematic of public-sphere debate—even though Swift and Company are also the public sphere's fiercest critics. This contradiction is not simply Habermas's; it is the Tories' own. The defining challenge facing the Tory satirists is to conduct a critique of the public sphere—that is, a critique of critique itself—from within that sphere's institutions. We might best understand such satire, then, as a kind of publishing that is not public, a genre that circulates freely in the print marketplace while renouncing the standards of public rationality. Tory satire will bestow this project on the category of literature that emerges later in the century—the project of a public textuality that operates outside the public sphere. (CT)

545 **Karen J. Kenkel**, Monstrous Women, Sublime Pleasure, and the Perils of Reception in Lessing's Aesthetics

Enlightenment intellectuals viewed the moral cultivation of the individual through aesthetic pleasure to be a crucial means for regulating social relations in bourgeois civil society. G. E. Lessing's drama criticism and plays reveal how important reshaping women's social identity was to the definition of morally productive aesthetic pleasure in the Enlightenment. Drawing on contemporary feminist theory, this essay explores how and why the tension between aesthetic pleasure and morality that runs through Lessing's work centers on developing bourgeois norms of femininity and on their violation in French classical and epic dramas. The essay reveals how the gender-specific moral demands placed on cultural pleasure in Lessing's drama criticism helped lay the foundation for a cultural crisis in the late eighteenth century, as well as for a divided public sphere. Lessing's plays, however, offer a more complex vision of the audience's interests and needs and a more open vision of women's possible social roles. (KJK)

562 **Gary Dyer**, Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets: Being Flash to Byron's *Don Juan*

"Flash," the slang of the criminal and boxing subcultures, illuminates Byron's *Don Juan* more than critics have recognized. This slang was devised to hide meanings from most listeners, and the flash language in the scene in which robbers attack Juan exemplifies discursive encryption in general. Such encryption is not always evidence that the speakers need to conceal their meaning, but it reminds us that in Byron's Britain many groups of people needed to communicate in secret, most often because of illegal activity, including illegal sexuality. The poet's most dangerous secret was sodomy, a capital crime, and the form of flash he had needed most was the coded language on which sodomites had to rely. The robbery scene

bestows darker connotations on the polyglossia that runs throughout *Don Juan*: such diversity can reflect not just emancipation but also constraint. (GD)

579 **Jay Prosser**, Under the Skin of John Updike: *Self-Consciousness* and the Racial Unconscious

Psoriasis is the structuring principle of John Updike's *Self-Consciousness*. The condition is also a metaphor for Updike's writings, in their concern with surface and their proliferation. Updike seeks to avoid self-revelation by making *Self-Consciousness* a memoir about the other. Displacing his psoriasis into a consideration of black and mixed-race skin, Updike reflects, in the mirror of the autobiography, his self with a letter to his half-black, half-white grandsons. In a series of pronominal substitutions, in which Updike's grandsons are transformed from addressees to narratees, *Self-Consciousness* discloses a racial unconscious. This racial unconscious is also that of American history. As slavery was founded on a Manichaeanism of black-white skin, desires for crossing the skin border were repressed. The unconscious dimension of racism survives in the stigmatization of differently marked skins. Reading the surface of *Self-Consciousness* as profound, this essay assigns Updike a novel place in a racially conscious American canon. (JP)