that Thomas "gratefully acknowledges" Kuznetsov in the book. Most of us can agree that Thomas's act of appropriation is different from, say, Stephen B. Oates's plagiarism of the work of B. P. Thomas for the biography of Abraham Lincoln or from I. U. Tarchetti's claiming his translation of Mary Shelley's *The Mortal Immortal* as his own original work or even from Eddie Murphy's illegal use of Art Buchwald's script idea for the film that became *Coming to America.* I agree with those who view Thomas as pursuing —with a postmodern twist—the theme of authenticity and history, an interpretation corroborated by other aspects of the text.

There are many reasons to adopt a complex attitude toward plagiarism. In the seventeenth century, print artists regularly copied paintings. Although they accurately reproduced the composition and position of the figures, they sometimes tinkered with the facial expressions, thereby reserving some originality in their prints for themselves. In recent autobiographical writing, Denis Donoghue boasts that he diligently copies in a notebook felicitous phrases he reads and then uses them in his own work. The poetry of Pound and Eliot is rapturously threaded with other texts. Appropriation for male modernists, particularly, paid tribute to the sources, as well as calling them into the present. Joyce Carol Oates's short story collection *Marriages and Infidelities*, on the other hand, takes canonical texts like Chekhov's "The Lady with the Dog" and refashions them into interrogations of the originals. Oates's version of Chekhov's story relocates the plot and characters in the twentieth century and moves the point of view from the man to the woman, thereby effectively arguing the proximity and distance of the two eras. In a similar vein, when Jean Rhys usurped the characters and plot of *Jane Eyre* for her *Wide Sargasso Sea*, she hoped to expose the assumptions of the amiable alliance of nineteenth-century English imperialism, Christianity, and patriarchy that served as the context for Charlotte Brontë's text. According to Harold Bloom, all the great poets were plagiarists to some degree. And Michel Foucault's question "What is an author?" throws the complications attached to plagiarism into hyperdrive.

Appropriation is part of the subversive idiom of postmodernism, as Andy Warhol's iconic Campbell's soup can attests. What does plagiarism mean when an author entitles books *Great Expectations* and *Don Quixote*, as does Kathy Acker, or an artist entitles a duplicate of an image by Miró *After Joan Miró*, as does Sherrie Levine? Calling such appropriation "plagiarism" abets the act's calculated perversity. Like Oates and Rhys, Acker and Levine interrogate the ubiquitous power of male culture in history. They make seditious moves against past paternal authority, which has largely determined the traditions within which present-day artists work.

Acker's and Levine's appropriations help me make the point in my article that an analysis of culture attempting universal statements that do not take difference into account, such as Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, may need to be adjusted for difference. For Acker and Levine, male texts and images determine the limits of representation for the female writer and artist. By insinuating themselves into canonical male works, Acker and Levine call attention to how much the works are governed by male desire and to their own alienness within it. The argument seems to be compelling: I just finished reviewing a new novel by a young writer, Lauren Fairbanks, entitled *Sister Carrie.*

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Excavating Epochal Allegory

To the Editor:

As someone who has a strong interest in allegory theory and who often laments its scarcity in the pages of *PMLA*, I enjoyed reading Jeanne P. Brownlow's article "Epochal Allegory in Galdós's *Torquemada*: The Ur-Text and the Episteme" (108 [1993]: 294–307). I also found illuminating and convincing Brownlow's incisive reading of Comtean historiography and economic metaphors in Galdós's text. I would like, however, to see clarification of some of the key theoretical formulations regarding the mutual relations among allegory, the Foucauldian episteme, and the problem of anteriority.

I am uneasy about the designation of Foucault's episteme as "allegorical." Theorists have been unable to settle on a consensus definition of allegory. Many of them see allegory as a synthesizing or totalizing mode of cognition. Specifically, allegory seems to reinvoke the Platonic dream of ideal and absent, unknowable, ineffable, extralinguistic, or supersensible essence. This dream and its various manifestations have been decisively targeted by poststructuralism, through a range of approaches including Foucauldian genealogical analysis, Derridean deconstruction, and Rortian pragmatism. Allegory would thus be taken as a formal sign for what Foucault's archaeology seeks to demolish.

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Therefore, a theorist like Brownlow offering a Foucauldian model of allegory must rigorously inspect his or her own self-constitutive epistemic matrix. Virtually all theorists of allegory, for instance, begin their projects by attending to a philological ground zero—that is, the etymological business about the derivation of the Hellenic term *allegoria* from *allos agorein* 'saying other.' Brownlow rehearses precisely this step as she launches her general definition of allegory by citing Isidore of Seville's authoritative and inaugural philological recovery (in Latin) of the cryptic term's meaning—*alieniloquium* 'other speech' (294). A thoroughgoing Foucauldian paradigm would circumvent or "excavate" this theoretically (and institutionally) sanctioned move, for philology stands as one of the preeminently positivistic sciences produced by the nineteenth-century academy. Philology conceals the cultural drive for pure and absolute semantic and ethnic origins, the collective desire for originary myths. (It is no coincidence that the discipline was reared in the late-nineteenth-century German university.) For the Foucauldian thinker, such a cultural apparatus must draw suspicion along with the Platonic residue of most allegory theory. At best, genealogical thinking might steer us to take Foucault's pronouncements about the "allegorical" relation of "the analysis of thought" to "the discourse that it employs" as somewhat offhanded, oblique, metaphoric, or, if you will, allegorical (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 27; cited in Brownlow 294).

The increased theoretical self-scrutiny I advocate also applies to the problem of Brownlow's semiotic model of allegory, whereby allegory functions, as "all commentators on allegory agree" (296), as the inscription of anteriority or temporality. In particular, Brownlow lays out an analogy that hinges either on a blunder or on a deconstructive misprision. She writes: "Foucault's episteme could be said to bear the same signifying relation to experienced history that an authoritative allegorical paradigm bears to a subsequent allegory or *that a typological antitype bears to a type*" (296; italics mine). Contrary to what the last clause says, in typology the type is the prefigurative or precursor element, while the antitype is the postfigurative or subsequent element. Brownlow's analogy thus misaligns types and antitypes with other things that come before ("an authoritative allegorical paradigm") and corresponding things that come after ("a subsequent allegory"). The confusion is significant and felicitous, however, because the focusing of a "deconstructive" theory of allegory on the problem of temporality (by means of de Man's pronouncements) calls up the drastically needed further deconstructive processing of that very problem. De Man's claims (found in "The Rhetoric of Temporality") really represent the maximal structuralist semiotization of allegory, rather than a poststructuralist or deconstructive modeling of the trope. That is to say, the allegorical sign functions as an embodiment of the most fundamental structural seme: anterior/posterior, or before/after. This sequential semiotic structure, a resolute binary opposition, must be given up or dismantled in a rigorous deconstructive paradigm. (Such a requirement perhaps explains de Man's entirely shifted model of allegory later on in *Allegories of Reading*.) One way to effect this deconstruction would be to play up inversions of before/after pairings. (Medieval typology, in fact, has been seen to deconstruct the semiotic foundations of anteriority.) Brownlow's confused analogy does just that.

Reading her passages on allegory and typology critically, one can conclude (as is inevitable in poststructuralist thought) that theoretical discussions of allegory, temporality, and the like are prey to the same latent textual forces that they seek to explain and control. Of course, Brownlow tries to lay all this out in two pages or so—a move that makes, I suspect, for much argumentative telescoping and compression. I certainly look forward to the promised book-length treatment of this matter. In that format, Brownlow will, I'm sure, expand on what is a tricky and sometimes galling theoretical problem.

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Reply:

James J. Paxson expounds the deconstructive argument admirably. To what he sees as my chronological confusion (or Bloomian misprision), I can only reply that, whether prefigural or postfigural, a typological set or sequence must be completed in order to be perceived as such. By the same token, the epistemic properties of an age can only be determined when its passing has made the epistemological attributes identifiable. My (certainly far too encapsulated) analogy between allegorical typology and such overarching historiographical framing devices as the Foucauldian episteme is therefore based on a cognitive similarity rather than on a temporal parallel. The apprehension of the allegorical agenda comes afterward in both cases.

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