
Abstracts

Paul Youngquist, De Quincey's Crazy Body 346

De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* evaluates life from the perspective of digestion instead of cognition. The text mounts a critique of Kant's transcendental philosophy that tests the freedom of reason against the fate of eating. De Quincey's "The Last Days of Immanuel Kant" relates details of the philosopher's life and diet that corroborate this critique. Opium becomes the hero of the *Confessions* because eating it changes De Quincey physiologically, forcing him to confront the body's materiality. From the opium eater's perspective, the beautiful and the sublime occur as effects, not of representation, but of incorporation, giving rise to the possibility of material thought. A specialized diet also challenges the norms of public medicine, such as those expressed in Thomas Beddoes's *Hygiea*, which grounds public health in private reflection and responsibility. De Quincey's *Confessions* affirms a subjectivity that is the effect of daily dosing. (PY)

Nicola Nixon, Men and Coats; or, The Politics of the Dandiacal Body in Melville's "Benito Cereno" 359

At the conclusion of "Benito Cereno" Herman Melville "elucidate[s]" a curious "item or two," including Cereno's ultragentelemanly apparel. This return to the issue of Cereno's clothes reiterates the Yankee Delano's preoccupation with Cereno as a dandy, restaging Delano's tendency to focus unswervingly on the apparently complex markers of class superiority signaled by such genteel refinement—and, within the logic of that preoccupation, to ignore the seemingly transparent truth presented by the naked black body. Melville mobilizes the figure of the dandy, I suggest, to interrogate the Yankee's veneration of social form, a veneration at odds with the North's smug self-figuration in 1855 as homogeneously democratic and classless, as morally superior to a South reviled for its social inequalities and slaveholding. By orchestrating the encounter between Yankee and dandy, Melville maps a peculiarly northern political field, pointing to an obfuscatory rhetoric of "apparent symbol[s]" that articulates the slave only polemically and ignores him otherwise. (NN)

Yael S. Feldman, Postcolonial Memory, Postmodern Intertextuality: Anton Shammas's *Arabesques* Revisited 373

This article challenges the interpretive consensus on Anton Shammas's 1986 Hebrew novel *Arabesques*. A narrow application of theoretical postcolonial constructs (e.g., making the events of 1948 the historical trauma that defines the collective memory of Shammas's narrative) misrepresents the complexity of the text as a whole. Analyzing the limitations of readings based solely on minority-discourse assumptions, the essay offers a counterreading, balancing the postcolonial grid with a postmodernist one. Tracing the novel's screen memories and its most daring (yet well-camouflaged) intertextuality opens up possibilities of representation and redefines the minority-majority relations in the novel. This reading strategy, attentive to the text's "difference from itself," allows for a nuanced redefinition of the identities constructed in *Arabesque* and suggests a new explanation for the choice of Hebrew as the language for this remembrance of lost Arab time. (YSF)