

Abstracts

Ethnos Meets Eros on the River Plate: Marcelo Birmajer, Sylvia Molloy, Anna Kazumi Stahl
Edna Aizenberg

This article deals with three contemporary novelists, Marcelo Birmajer, Anna Kazumi Stahl and Sylvia Molly in the context of a new understanding of ethnicity, sexuality and literature in Argentina. In contrast to previous eras when writing reflected a melting pot philosophy which saw Eros as a means of fusing ethnicities and eliminating particularities, today's fiction often celebrates these differences, uncovering layers of secrecy and demanding a place for various languages, sexualities and geographies. (EA)

Proustian Metaphor and the Automobile
Shawn Gorman

In Marcel Proust's *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, the automobile produces a transformation in the relationship between space and time and, by analogy, a parallel transformation in art. In Proust's famous notion of involuntary memory, the similarity of a past sense impression to a present one leads to transcendence of time and space, and ultimately to metaphor. The metonymical speed of the automobile endlessly chases the sort of metaphorical "simultaneity" at work in involuntary memory. Structurally, the automobile offers the possibility of bringing together two terms by eliminating the middle term (time, space) that separated them; yet the automobile is never fast enough to reach the atemporal perfection of metaphor, and the third term reappears. We therefore examine how the automobile in this and other texts by Proust exhibits both metaphorical and metonymi-

cal properties. The automobile creates unexpected connections and reveals, in a displaced form, surprising relationships among characters, emotions, objects, and symbols. In its role as metaphor, the automobile stands for processes that are negatively marked, like aesthetic fetishism, while in its role as metonymy, the automobile leads to pleasure and appeasement. (SG)

Toward a *Meta* Understanding of Reality: The Problem of Reference in Russian Metarealist Poetry

Albena Lutzkanova-Vassileva

Through an in-depth analysis of Russian metarealist poetry, the paper seeks to undermine the increasingly popular belief in the self-referential nature of postmodern literature and deconstructive writing. To challenge the conviction that postmodern texts have cut off literary discourse from reality, the author focuses on the writing of Olga Sedakova and Elena Shvarts. Her analysis of Sedakova's *Vrata, Okna, Arki* attempts to draw a parallel between the schools of Russian symbolism and metarealism, and demonstrate the increased referential potential of metarealist writing. While symbolism *juxtaposes* the mundane reality *here* to the eternal spiritual world *beyond*, she argues in the paper, metarealism practices an optimistic *monism*, interconnecting perceptual realities to levels of existence in a metaphysical beyond. Introducing Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the *rhizome*, the author analyzes the ways in which the poetry of Sedakova establishes connections with the multi-layered corpus of reality and thus expands the notion of referentiality. The paper proceeds with an examination of Shvarts's *Lotsiia Nochi*. The author advances a provocative reading of Shvarts's work from the point of view of Deleuze and Guattari's theory of *de- and reterritorialization* and Mikhail Epstein's notion of the *metabole*. By way of examining the metamorphic quality of metarealist poetry and the multifaceted modes of reality's manifestation within it, the essay discards as unwarranted the mourning over the postmodern eclipse of reality and the subject's incapacity to represent it. Metarealism, the author concludes, restores the pristine polyphony of our multidimensional universe and vindicates the prestige formerly allotted to referentiality. (AL-V)

The Value of Kitsch. Hermann Broch and Robert Musil on Art and Morality

Patrizia C. McBride

This article examines the discourse on kitsch articulated by Austrian novelists Hermann Broch (1886-1951) and Robert Musil (1880-1942) between 1930 and 1950. In particular, I focus on the ways in which the two novelists draw the distinction of value between real and pseudo art (or kitsch). As I argue, their disagreement on this matter is emblematic of dilemmas that continue to confront aesthetic evaluation today. While Broch anchors value in a metaphysical realm on the outside of aesthetic discourse, assuming a late-idealistic notion of art, Musil frames the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' art within an empirical, relativistic, and immanent understanding of aesthetic experience. In the final section I draw on Hal Foster's notion of a "critical distance" (*The Return of the Real*, 1996) to discuss the advantages and limitations of the evaluative paradigms suggested by the two novelists. (PCM)

Parodic Musings on Futurism and *Amore* in Oliverio Girondo's *Espantapájaros* (*al alcance de todos*).

Patricia Montilla

The Argentine poet Oliverio Girondo (1891-1967) was one of the leading figures of the Spanish American avant-garde. Appearing in 1932 approximately two decades after the rise of Futurism, Girondo's third collection of poetry, *Espantapájaros* (*al alcance de todos*), mocks the already clichéd literary conventions promulgated by the avant-garde. Many of the book's poems parody the principles outlined in the founding "Manifesto of Futurism" (1909) and in F. T. Marinetti's subsequent writings.

This study closely examines the poems in *Espantapájaros* that play on Futurism's assault on amore and sentimentality, its scorn for woman, its promotion of sex as a sole means of reproduction, and its glorification of danger and violence. It also analyzes how Girondo adapts the poetic techniques outlined in Marinetti's "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (1912) and incorporates, at times hu-

morously, Futurist iconography of man and machine and of bodies and matter in motion. Girondo's poems question Futurist views on love while demonstrating that although once jolting and rebellious, they were quickly imitated and eventually absorbed into the literary canon. Unlike the Futurists, Girondo does not advocate a clean slate from which to create new art. Instead, the poems of *Espantapájaros* convey continuity through the use of parody, allowing Girondo to construct a link between the past and present and to challenge Futurist ideologies and poetics while simultaneously composing new poetry. (PMM)

Origins, Loss, and Recovery in Patrick Modiano's *Voyage de nocces* and *Dora Bruder*

Ann L. Murphy

By alluding to the writing of his 1990 novel *Voyage de nocces* in the course of the narration of 1997 *Dora Bruder*, author Patrick Modiano invites an examination of the connections between these two works. This paper demonstrates how *Voyage de nocces* and *Dora Bruder*, when studied together as a sort of diptych, are informed by what commentators have described as Modiano's simultaneous preoccupations with the expression of absence and loss, on the one hand, and with the use of writing to compensate for these, on the other. Specifically, a formal and thematic relationship between these two texts is shaped first by a movement from origins to loss, as developed in *Voyage de nocces*, and then by an inverse movement from loss to recovery as outlined in *Dora Bruder*. However, just as the fullness of being that typically characterizes the idealized version of origins--here, meaningful parental presence and a sense of personal identity--is always already deflated by the recognition that this fullness is not a given but rather remains to be realized, absolute recovery, too, is impossible. (ALM)

Repeat Offenders: Violence and Textual Economy

Scott Shinabargar

L'acte surréalistite le plus simple consiste, revolvers aux poings, à descendre dans la rue et à tirer au hasard, tant qu'on

peut, dans la foule. (Breton, Manifestes 155)

It is difficult not to feel uncomfortable reading this well-known passage now, in light of recent events. And yet, isn't this perhaps precisely the reason such a text demands our attention? By studying similar passages in Breton's writing, we find that it is through a very particular use of language that the alienated subject acquires a sense of empowerment; and more importantly, that the force of such a discourse is extremely limited—dependent on a destructive relation to alterity—precisely where it promises liberation. Through close textual analysis, we observe that the “terrorist” writer in fact ends up reproducing, and indeed exacerbating the very process of devaluation he has set out to transcend. As the writer increasingly fixates on oppressive institutions and conventions, the insistence of his invective—a repetition compulsion we find establishing itself in the very prosodic structures of the text—generates a language which, instead of opening out onto new possibilities for meaning, produces semantic homogeneity. (SS)

“The Lady in Pink: Dress and the Enigma of Gendered Space in Marcel Proust’s Fiction”

Eva Maria Stadler

A study of the role of clothing as central to issues of characterization, description and historical reference in Marcel Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Focus on Odette de Crécy, one of the central characters in the novel, a courtesan who becomes the wife of Charles Swann but who first captivates the narrator’s imagination when, as a child, he briefly sees her as a “Lady in Pink.”

Odette’s role as a fashionable woman, as one of the best-dressed women in Parisian society, gives unity to her character. The description of her clothing, however, not only provides the occasion for an accurate recreation of contemporary dress codes. The links between clothing and a woman’s body are explicitly explored in creating the character of Odette. Her femininity is defined specifically in terms of surfaces and objects and her personality seems to assume its reality from costume. Dress not only encloses her lovely appearance; it gives substance to her person and order to her life. Through the agency of dress this ordinary, even vulgar

woman rises above her condition and enters a world of passion and poetry. (EMS)

Surveillance and Liberty in Céline's New York, the City That Doesn't Sleep (Around)

Jennifer Willging

This essay focuses on Ferdinand Bardamu's account of his stay in New York City in Louis-Ferdinand Céline's bleak bildungsroman, *Journey to the End of the Night* (1932). In it I explore the rather surprising absence of reference to the Statue of Liberty in a text narrated by a French immigrant of sorts who spends weeks on Ellis Island and who immediately personifies the city as an androgynous, steely, and indeed statue-like woman. Applying to the text Foucault's theories on the disciplinary nature of modern western society, I suggest that it is Bardamu's suspicion that he is under unobtrusive yet constant surveillance while in the Big Apple that explains his deliberate erasure of Liberty/liberty from the skyline he paints in his narrative. I further argue that Bardamu tends to see the implacable surveillance he undergoes throughout his American adventure as feminine. That is, he identifies it as emanating principally from those cold, impenetrable, but impossibly beautiful creatures—*les Américaines*—that this vertical and imposing mother-city has birthed. (JW)