

Abstracts

340 **M. Allewaert, Swamp Sublime: Ecologies of Resistance in the American Plantation Zone**

I propose that William Bartram's *Travels* yields an ecological conception of revolution that alters theorizations of resistance in the eighteenth-century plantation zone. The entanglements that proliferated in the plantation zone disabled taxonomies distinguishing the human from the animal from the vegetable from the atmospheric, giving rise to an awareness of ecology. This ecological orientation departs from an eighteenth-century political and aesthetic tradition distinguishing persons—in particular white colonial subjects—from the objects and terrains they surveyed. In fact, Bartram's increasingly ecological orientation compromised his ability to function as a citizen-subject of print culture. Focusing on Anglo-European travelers and on African resistance, I argue that instead of simply producing subjects who gained power through an abstract and abstracting print culture, the plantation zone witnessed the emergence of agents who gained power from combining with ecological forces. (MA)

358 **Lauren Coats, Matt Cohen, John David Miles, Kinohi Nishikawa, and Rebecca Walsh, Those We Don't Speak Of: Indians in *The Village***

American literary studies has shown that the symbolic exclusion of Native Americans from the Puritan and early national imaginaries was an essential component of the making of an American identity. This argument builds on reading practices that stress literary-historical contextualization. Our essay considers how M. Night Shyamalan's film *The Village* (2004) addresses the continuing relevance of Native American exclusion from the national imaginary not by faithfully representing "history" but by layering its narrative with multiple historical registers. Realized through editing, cinematography, and set design, these registers—seventeenth-century Puritan, turn-of-the-twentieth-century utopian, and "the present"—are stage-managed by a group of idealistic elders who wish to protect their community from the evils of the world outside. While most critics have reduced *The Village* to an allegory of post-9/11 United States political culture, we propose a viewing of the film as parable that marks historical collapses and exclusions as the limits of utopia. (LC, MC, JDM, KN, RW)

375 **D. Christopher Gabbard, From Idiot Beast to Idiot Sublime: Mental Disability in John Cleland's *Fanny Hill***

This essay investigates an erotic encounter between the libertine Louisa and Good-natured Dick, foregrounding the way Dick's representation challenges early modern notions of idiocy as a fixed condition and Enlightenment assumptions (articulated in John Locke's *Essay*) that rationality and linguistic capability underwrite human superiority. Employing disability studies as a frame, it explores how cognitive impairment can serve as a device for elucidating the text's thematic preoccupation with valorizing signs and sensation over

language and reason. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's concept of "narrative prosthesis" comes into play as the piece interrogates the passage's sublime rhetoric and allusion to the theriophilic paradox. References to discourses concerning animal soul (René Descartes and Pierre Gassendi), sign language (Johann Conrad Amman), medical understandings of the nerves and sensation (Thomas Willis), and setting species boundaries (Julien de La Mettrie) illustrate that the episode is a locus classicus of anti-Lockean epistemology, one pointing forward to the abbé de Condillac and Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard (originator of special education). (DCG)

390 **Adam Potkay, Wordsworth and the Ethics of Things**

Wordsworth poetically realizes an ecological ethics grounded on the self's non-assimilative encounter with the otherness of nonhuman things. Engaging the etymological force of the word *thing*, Stoic and Spinozan philosophy, and a poetic tradition of assigning a "face" to natural things, Wordsworth arrives at a lyric apprehension of the "life of things," a life that human beings share with other thinking and insentient, substantial and circumstantial things. Instead of anthropomorphizing things, Wordsworth "thingicizes" ethics. This aspect of Wordsworth's poems is illuminated when they are read alongside the "ethics of things" developed by Silvia Benso in philosophical dialogue with two major figures of the continental tradition: Heidegger, who conceives of things without ethics, and Levinas, who advances an ethics without things. (AP)

405 **Jonathan Stone, Polyphony and the Atomic Age: Bakhtin's Assimilation of an Einsteinian Universe**

Mikhail Bakhtin described a novelistic world bound to the reader's point of view and perception of reality. Albert Einstein's theory of relativity justified Bakhtin's elevation of the reader to a central position in his theory of the novel. This essay examines Bakhtin's engagement with Einsteinian relativity in the context of two of his most influential contributions to critical discourse—polyphony and the chronotope. Originating in the 1920s, Bakhtin's notion of polyphony was initially an expression of his Kantian mind-set. When Bakhtin reworked his formulation of polyphony in 1963 (having already broached the topic of literary spatiotemporality with the chronotope), Einstein had replaced Kant as Bakhtin's guiding intellectual paradigm. In advocating a relativistic model to explicate the literary world, Bakhtin aligned centuries of novelistic tradition with a distinctly modern worldview. His use of the epistemological possibilities inaugurated by twentieth-century physics allowed him to interpret centuries-old texts with an insightfulness available only to a post-Einsteinian reader. (JS)

422 **Michael Collins**, The Consent of the Governed in Ishmael Reed's *The Freelance Pallbearers*

The critical ingredient of American democracy—the consent of the governed—is placed under the microscope in Ishmael Reed's *The Freelance Pallbearers* and his related works. Reed's portrait of the consent of the governed—and of the ways in which it is undermined—allows us to discern the structure of what medical and legal thinkers call informed consent: agreement that is the fruit of neither force, fraud, nor incapacity. Reed's portrayal of battles for and against consent, in fact, allows us to theorize that a key distinction between more and less democratic societies is the sort of “consent horizon” within which their citizens operate. (MC)