

PMLA

Volume 93
Number 5

*Publications of the
Modern Language Association
of America*

October 1978

REMEMBRANCES OF CONCORD AND THE THOREAUS

Letters of Horace Hosmer to Dr. S. A. Jones

Edited by George Hendrick. "The thrilling annals of the scholar-detective must now include the story of these 41 letters traced to an Illinois attic by an English professor. Written by a Concord working man . . . who knew the Thoreau household and the townfolk intimately, the letters were directed in the 1890s to a physician searching for the true details of Thoreau's life. Providing many fresh facts and new insights, Hosmer writes with such force and humor and bite that his letters are to be treasured for their own quality as well as their contribution to Thoreau scholarship."
—*Library Journal*. "This is the most personable glimpse of Thoreau since Edward Emerson's 1917 *Henry Thoreau as Remembered by a Young Friend*. Don't miss it." —*Thoreau Society Bulletin*. \$8.95.



Henry David Thoreau

HENRY SALT

Humanitarian Reformer and Man of Letters

George Hendrick. A clear, concise treatment of the intellectual life and work of a figure who may be considered unique in his commitment to humanitarian goals. "All ardent Thoreauvians should be aware of Henry Salt's immense contributions to Thoreau's fame and scholarship in England at the turn of the century. Their best evaluation so far is to be found in this new biography." —*Thoreau Society Bulletin*. \$10.00.



Henry Salt

Individuals please include cash with order. We pay postage and handling charges.



University of Illinois Press Urbana 61801

October 1978

PMIA

*Publications of the
Modern Language Association of America*

Volume 93

Number 5

PUBLISHED SIX TIMES A YEAR BY THE ASSOCIATION

The Modern Language Association of America

ORGANIZED 1883

INCORPORATED 1900

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1978

President: WALTER J. ONG, *St. Louis University*
First Vice-President: JEAN A. PERKINS, *Swarthmore College*
Second Vice-President: HELEN VENDLER, *Boston University*
Executive Director: WILLIAM D. SCHAEFER (through 31 August 1978)
JOEL CONARROE (from 1 September 1978)
Deputy Executive Director: HANS RÜTIMANN

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

For the term ending 31 December 1978

SIDONIE CASSIRER
Mount Holyoke College
RUTH EL SAFFAR
University of Illinois, Chicago Circle
EDWARD WASIOLEK
University of Chicago

For the term ending 31 December 1980

GEOFFREY H. HARTMAN
Yale University
WINFRED P. LEHMANN
University of Texas, Austin
MARILYN L. WILLIAMSON
Wayne State University

For the term ending 31 December 1979

DAVID J. DELAURA
University of Pennsylvania
CAROLYN G. HEILBRUN
Columbia University
RONALD PAULSON
Yale University

For the term ending 31 December 1981

BARBARA BOWEN
University of Illinois
JAMES LAWLER
Dalhousie University
MARJORIE G. PERLOFF
University of Southern California

TRUSTEES OF INVESTED FUNDS

GORDON N. RAY
Guggenheim Foundation, Managing Trustee
C. WALLER BARRETT
Charlottesville, Virginia
ROBERT LUMIANSKY
American Council of Learned Societies

PMLA is issued six times a year, in January, March, May, September, October, and November, by the Modern Language Association of America, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011. Membership is open to those persons who are professionally interested in the modern languages and literatures. Annual dues, which include subscription to *PMLA*, are based on members' salaries and are graduated as follows: student members, \$10; unemployed regular members, \$10; regular members (first two years), \$20; regular members (salary under \$12,000), \$25; regular members (salary \$12,000–\$18,000), \$30; regular members (salary over \$18,000), \$35; joint members (with only one subscription to *PMLA*), \$45; foreign members, same as regular members.

The subscription price of *PMLA* for libraries and other institutions is \$35. A subscription including a bound volume at the end of the year is \$55, domestic and foreign. Agents deduct 10% as their fee. Single copies of the January, March, May, and October issues may be obtained for \$5 each; the November Program issue for \$10; the September Directory issue for \$15.

Issues for the current year are available from the MLA Publications Center. Claims for undelivered issues will be honored if they are received within one year of the publication date; thereafter the single issue price will be charged.

For information about the availability of back issues, inquire of Kraus Reprint Co., Millwood, N.Y. 10546; (914) 762-2200. Early and current volumes may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. Purchase of current volumes on film is restricted to subscribers of the journal.

OFFICE OF PUBLICATION AND EDITORIAL OFFICES

62 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011 *Tel.*: 212 741-5588

All communications, including notices of changes of address, should be sent to the Membership Office of the Association at 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. If a change of address also involves a change of institutional affiliation, the Membership Office should be informed of this fact at the same time.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing office.
Copyright © 1978 by The Modern Language Association of America.
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 12-32040.

Contents · October

Editor's Column 859

The Fiction of Coherence: George Herbert's "The Collar."
BARBARA LEAH HARMAN 865

Abstract. Uneasy with the forms of literary expression and its costs, the speakers of Herbert's poems frequently bear disturbed relationships to their own accounts. An interesting version of the disturbance between storyteller and story occurs in "The Collar," where present-tense speech is fenced off from, and framed by, the eroding influence of a retrospective narrative voice. The poem provides an occasion to study the motives for and virtues of storytelling, to examine the ways in which accounts are not only generated but preserved, and to explore those problems that arise when a fixed story must be reread and its boundaries changed. Because the speaker of "The Collar" both protects and dismantles his account, the poem also raises questions about the values we attach to narratives, the costs we are willing to support in order to maintain them, and the difficulties we undergo when stories fail to represent us in traditional ways. (BLH)

Mark Twain: The Writer as Pilot. EDGAR J. BURDE 878

Abstract. Clemens' complex feelings about his piloting days provide insights into his imagination and his identity problems. Despite his nostalgia, Clemens feared the river and exorcised his fears by imaginatively identifying with Horace Bixby, his former steamboating master. Drawing upon his recollections for "Old Times on the Mississippi" in 1874, Clemens became a figurative master pilot, using the same order of memory that Bixby demands of the cub. Clemens' 1882 river trip was motivated in part by an unconscious desire to recover his intuitive "Bixby memory"; he was searching for both his former master and his own imaginative self. The trip, however, was a sign that his intuitive memory had failed him and he was depending on direct observation. His "invocation" of the hateful pilot Brown (with his chaotic, literal memory) at the beginning of the 1882 writing of *Life on the Mississippi* foreshadows Clemens' failure to achieve imaginative coherence in the second part of the book.(EJB)

The New Poet Presents Himself: Spenser and the Idea of a Literary Career. RICHARD HELGERSON 893

Abstract. The Renaissance idea of a great national poet, the idea on which so many defenses of poetry were implicitly or explicitly based, found its first English incarnation in the career of Edmund Spenser. But the incarnation fundamentally transformed the idea, for Spenser was caught in a literary system that defined the poet in a quite different way—not as an inspired maker of vatic images, but rather as a youth culpably distracted by passion from the real business of life. Spenser's presentation of himself as Poet can be seen as an attempt to reconcile these two notions, neither of which he could wholly abandon. Without the heroic ideal he could not escape the repentance that prematurely cut off the literary careers of the other poets of his generation, but without some participation in the Elizabethan paradigm of the lover-poet he might not be thought a poet at all.(RH)

Coleridge's Interpretation of Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. DON H. BIALOSTOSKY 912

Abstract. Although Coleridge's interpretation of Wordsworth's Preface has shaped subsequent understanding of Wordsworth's meaning, Coleridge was out not to clarify but to refute Wordsworth. His discussion of the Preface repeatedly shifts the positions to which it objects and misleadingly distinguishes between what the Preface can legitimately be taken to mean and what it probably does mean. It distorts Wordsworth's account of his choice of subjects and his comments on poetic language. Although intelligible meanings can be discovered for Wordsworth's remarks about "the real language of men" and the lack of "essential difference" between the languages of verse and prose, Coleridge's exegesis reduces them to absurdity. The position he offers in opposition to the one he draws from the Preface closely resembles the one Wordsworth actually put forward there. The real agreements and disagreements between Wordsworth's and Coleridge's views are more interesting than those to which Coleridge's interpretation has called attention. (DHB)

The Decor of Molière's Stage: The Testimony of Brissart and Chauveau. ROGER W. HERZEL 925

Abstract. The engravings that appeared as frontispieces in seventeenth-century editions of Molière's works show that the decor of his stage was not nearly so universalized and unspecific as is generally believed. Each of his plays had its own individualized setting, and he laid increasing stress on the scenic environment for his plays as his career progressed. His earliest plays were set in variations of the traditional decor of comedy: the street before two houses. In *Tartuffe* and *Le Misanthrope* he made the stage represent a private domestic interior. In plays like *Le Sicilien* and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* the scenic definition of stage space became more fluid and fanciful. And in his last play, *Le Malade imaginaire*, Molière used the most advanced scenic technology of his day to provide a decor that reflected the extravagant folly of his hero. (RWH)

"The Babes in the Wood": Artemus Ward's "Double Health" to Mark Twain. EDGAR M. BRANCH 955

Abstract. In his legendary lecture "The Babes in the Wood" (1863–64), Artemus Ward wanted to "go in for fun," and he artfully structured the talk to exemplify his credo: "We better stay in the sunshine while we may, inasmuch as we know the shadows will come all too soon." Mark Twain heard Ward speak in Virginia City and later wrote that "The Babes" was "the funniest thing I ever listened to." This article reproduces a reasonably accurate speaking text of "The Babes" and considers it in relation to Mark Twain's theory and practice of lecturing and to his early written humor. Its comedy offered Mark Twain, among other things, a demonstration of (1) complex rhetorical strategies and (2) a sophisticated burlesque of the serious lyceum lecture. To clarify its burlesque dimension, "The Babes" is then compared to Emerson's lecture "The Law of Success" (which Ward had heard and reported). (EMB)

The Great Feud: Scriptural History and Strife in *Beowulf*. MARIJANE OSBORN 973

Abstract. Dorothy Whitelock describes family and national feuds in *Beowulf* as "sub-plots" to the monster fights. But the theme of feud history is more

complex than that. There are the Scandinavian fights, some of them perceived and all relevant within the heroic world of the story, and the Great Feud of sacred history, associated in its beginnings with the monster fights in Denmark and in its end with the dragon fight in Geatland. This cosmic feud, introduced in the “scripturizing” passages of the poem, is not perceived within the world of the story. By distinguishing between the kind of knowledge available in that world and the kind available to his audience, the poet foregrounds the theme of the Great Feud and aligns the noble pagans of the poem with God, thereby “redeeming” the cultural identity of an audience for whom the Scandinavian matter of *Beowulf* is ancestral lore.(MO)

The Fairest of Them All: Modes of Vision in *Madame Bovary*.
LAWRENCE THORNTON 982

Abstract. By revealing Emma’s subjectivity in descriptive, hallucinatory, and auto-scopical modes of vision, Flaubert shows that two false versions of reality dominate her imagination: the marvelous, derived from her reading, and the endoxal, derived from her culture. These modes of vision, which are manifested in a series of mirror images, show Emma incapable of distinguishing between past and present, fantasy and reality, and lead as well to the discovery that her fantasies about all men remain vague and abstract. Emma can only differentiate women in her imagination, and the autoeroticism informing her narcissism finally displaces infidelity as the source of her most erotic experiences. Throughout *Madame Bovary*, Emma’s subjectivity becomes increasingly associated with the fantastic, until she is seen to have completely lost touch with reality.(LT)

The Esthetics of Perversion: Gothic Artifice in Henry James and Witold Gombrowicz. PATRICIA MERIVALE 992

Abstract. Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Sacred Fount*, like Gombrowicz’ *Pornografia* and *Cosmos*, are not only Gothic artist parables in the nineteenth-century mode but also metaphysical detective stories and self-reflexive texts in the contemporary mode. Their heroes, whether voyeurs or stage directors, manipulate other, innocent characters into the substance of their own fictions: the creation of texts is thus seen as a morally tainted endeavor.(PM)

Forum 1003
1978 MLA Elections 1017
Forthcoming Meetings and Conferences of General Interest 1030
Professional Notes and Comment 1036

EDITORIAL BOARD

MARY ANN CAWS, 1980
*Hunter College and Graduate School
City University of New York*
JACKSON I. COPE, 1980
University of Southern California
PETER DEMETZ, 1980
Yale University

PAUL R. OLSON, 1979
Johns Hopkins University
RICHARD POIRIER, 1979
Rutgers University
BARBARA HERRNSTEIN SMITH, 1979
University of Pennsylvania

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHARLES ALTIERI, 1982
University of Washington
PETER BROOKS, 1980
Yale University
DORRIT COHN, 1979
Harvard University
JONATHAN D. CULLER, 1982
Cornell University
STUART CURRAN, 1982
University of Pennsylvania
ANDREW DEBICKI, 1980
University of Kansas
JOHN G. GARRARD, 1979
University of Virginia
BLANCHE GELFANT, 1982
Dartmouth College
CONSTANCE B. HIEATT, 1982
University of Western Ontario
PAUL A. JORGENSEN, 1982
University of California, Los Angeles

U. C. KNOEFLMACHER, 1981
University of California, Berkeley
JOHN W. KRONIK, 1981
Cornell University
BARBARA K. LEWALSKI, 1981
Brown University
MARTIN MEISEL, 1982
Columbia University
NEAL OXENHANDLER, 1980
Dartmouth College
ROY HARVEY PEARCE, 1979
University of California, San Diego
J. L. SIMMONS, 1980
Tulane University
PATRICIA SPACKS, 1980
Wellesley College
CATHARINE STIMPSON, 1982
Barnard College
ALEX ZWERDLING, 1982
University of California, Berkeley

Editor: WILLIAM D. SCHAEFER
Production Manager: JEFFREY HOWITT
Assistant Editor: CLAIRE COOK

Managing Editor: JUDY GOULDING
Assistant Managing Editor: MARGOT RABINER
Assistant Editor: ROSLYN SCHLOSS

Editorial Assistant: SUSAN LAUFER

A STATEMENT OF EDITORIAL POLICY

PMLA publishes articles on the modern languages and literatures that are of significant interest to the entire membership of the Association. Articles should therefore normally: (1) employ a widely applicable approach or methodology; or (2) use an interdisciplinary approach of importance to the interpretation of literature; or (3) treat a broad subject or theme; or (4) treat a major author or work; or (5) discuss a minor author or work in such a way as to bring insight to a major author, work, genre, or critical method. Articles of fewer than 2,500 or more than 12,500 words are not normally considered for publication.

Only members of the Association may submit articles to *PMLA*. Each article submitted will be sent to at least one consultant reader and one member of the Advisory Committee. If recommended by these readers it will then be sent to the members of the Editorial Board, who meet every three months to discuss such articles and assist the Editor in making final decisions.

Submissions, prepared according to the second edition of the *MLA Style Sheet* (now incorporated in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*), should be addressed to the Editor of *PMLA*, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011. Only an original typescript, not a photocopy or carbon, should be submitted.