

Introduction

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It is a joy to be presenting to you the fall issue of *Theocrit's* second volume. The essays found in this issue are insightful and thought-provoking. They are beautifully written by very talented students. We have six new and enjoyable essays to share, along with three new features. As a part of *Theocrit's* mission to inform its readers about the various schools of literary criticism and theory so integral to the discipline, beginning with this issue *Theocrit* will offer book reviews on texts that examine specific critical and theoretical approaches. For this issue, the staff of *Theocrit* chose ecocriticism, a particularly timely critical approach with a long history in literature. Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism*, a part of Routledge's New Critical Idiom series, and Lawrence Coupe's edited collection of nature writing and ecocriticism, *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, provide readers with both a theoretical grounding in this approach as well as a diverse selection of seminal pieces in Western nature writing from the past two hundred years. To complement the book reviews on ecocriticism and nature writing, another new feature, the scholar interview, profiles two individuals, Dr. Daryl Farmer and Dr. Marnie Sullivan, whose work and teaching are significantly informed by ecological concerns. Taken together, the book reviews and scholar profiles offer readers useful guides and thought-provoking insights into the theories, issues, and debates that shape how literature is read and analyzed. Our third feature, the author spotlight, was more a matter of kismet than design; after receiving two intriguing essays on the eighteenth century writer Frances Burney, we decided to create a feature providing a short biography on Burney, who is a well-respected, if not particularly well-known author.

Amanda Mixon and Tia Hensley offer two readings of Burney's most famous novel, *Evelina*. "Satirizing Society: The Dangers of Dressing the Part," written by Tia Hensley, addresses the issue of class ranking in society, focusing not on the dress of the characters but on their actions. "Traces of Rousseau in Frances Burney's *Evelina*," written by Amanda Mixon, takes a different perspective on *Evelina*. Amanda Mixon shows the Rousseauian influence in *Evelina*, by comparing the themes in *Evelina* with the theories by Rousseau shown in his own writings. Mixon also includes a biography of how Rousseau and Francis Burney would have been influenced by each other based upon their real life connections. While both essays provide two different arguments for the novel *Evelina*, both essays delve into the social structure of the society and the individual actions of people.

The next two essays provide two different insights into reality. M. Brett Gaffney brings us into the debate of fiction versus reality in her essay "Don Quixote: Bridging Reality and Fiction." She provides a thoughtful analysis of the main character from *Don Quixote* by Cervantes. She provides ample examples for her argument from Don Quixote's ascent into reality from madness. Gaffney's final thesis in her essay leaves the reader thinking about which is better: the fantasy world or reality. She shows Don Quixote's influence over the minor characters and their preference for reality or fantasy. Gaffney also makes the distinction, which is shown in Don Quixote's thoughts of Dulcinea, of fictional characters versus real people.

Like Gaffney in her essay on *Don Quixote*, Brittany Krantz addresses the issue of reality. Brittany Krantz takes us back to the popular character of Huck Finn in her essay "Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." Gaffney goes into the battle between

the real world and the fantasy world within the mind, while Krantz addresses how Mark Twain makes his fictional characters real to the reader. Krantz uses selections from William Wordsworth's "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*" and Henry James' "The Art of Fiction," relating both pieces to the use of language and the reality of the characters in *Huckleberry Finn*. Krantz shows how the use of language and dialect can make the characters real to the reader. Krantz makes the connection between the language being used in *Huckleberry Finn* by the characters and how the readers perceive the characters. Through language the reader can better understand the character.

The next two essays show the transformation of an innocent girl into a young woman of experience. Luke Landtroop describes the growth of Sylvia when she has to make a difficult choice in his essay "Sylvia's Choice." Sylvia is the heroine of "A White Heron," written by Sarah Orne Jewett. Sylvia, through her journey of finding the nest of the white heron, has to make the choice whether or not to keep the heron safe or disclose the heron's whereabouts to the hunter. Landtroop does a beautiful job of showing that not only does her choice include the safety of the bird, but also encompasses the choice between keeping her innocence or experiencing love. Sylvia's choice also portrays not only her own personal struggle, but also that of the debate in American society between keeping with old traditions or moving towards capitalist innovation.

The next essay on the transformation from innocence to experience is by Brittany O'Sullivan, who takes us into the world of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, written by Lewis Carroll, in her essay "Sex and Food: Alice's Sexual Development through Consumption." O'Sullivan makes many references to Lewis Carroll's relationship with a young girl named Alice and how she inspired his novel. Carroll inserts many obstacles

before Alice, in the novel, that she must overcome, showing his distaste for certain society rules and expectations. Each obstacle is a metaphor for an aspect of society or of women that Lewis Carroll did not like in Victorian society. O'Sullivan also points out the many references to food in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as being directions towards Alice's sexual maturity.

Once again, the staff of *Theocrit* is proud to offer another issue of thoughtful student essays, and is particularly excited to introduce the new features to the journal. This is a wonderful time for *Theocrit* as it builds its identity and sharpens its purpose, and the hard work of its staff shows in this issue. We hope you enjoy this issue and we look forward to offering *Theocrit's* first special issue, "Bedtime Stories," in the spring of 2010.