

Introduction

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Here, for *Mosaic* readers, is an issue that both theorizes and performs the interdisciplinarity that this journal is all about. The opening roundtable, taped in June 2001 at the No Sense of Discipline conference at the University of Queensland, Australia, brings together four of the world's leading scholars in a discussion of the disciplines, and interdisciplinarity, in today's university: Sander Gilman, Linda Hutcheon, Michael Hutcheon, and Helen Tiffin. All four of these scholars are well known for their work on representations of the body, healthy and diseased, and on the intersections of medicine and literature, which, as Sander Gilman puts it, "are not two worlds" after all. "Both address basic questions of the nature of life and death, using different means and different approaches—yet both use language to narrate and communicate." As it turns out, several of the essays in this issue are cases in point. They are essays that bring medicine and literature together so as to show us that, while there are different sets of tools, there is only one world.

Anne McWhir, in "Mary Shelley's Anti-Contagionism: *The Last Man* as 'Fatal Narrative,'" demonstrates how Shelley's novel reflects on and literalizes the disease theory of her day. "Because it does so from an explicitly anti-contagionist perspective," McWhir writes, "Shelley's novel

transforms a relatively straightforward discourse of cause and effect into one of mystery, uncertainty, and insidious influence.” William Major, in his essay, asks whether the subject of illness narrative might be a special case, “somehow different from the subjects of other forms of life writing.” Approaching Audre Lorde as his “autopathographer,” and reading through “the lens of postmodern theories of identity,” Major’s “Audre Lorde’s *The Cancer Journals*: Autopathography as Resistance,” raises ethical questions that bear on the autonomy of those who are seriously ill. Andrzej Dziejic, in “Entre l’art de guérir et l’art d’écrire: René Bretonnayau,” through a close reading of Bretonnayau’s work, demonstrates that, for this sixteenth-century physician at least, medical knowledge can be translated into poetic discourse. Eva Mokry Pohler’s “Genetic and Cultural Selection in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*” brings evolutionary biology and literature together, here as an examination of the nature of freedom in Fowles’s novel.

Consumption, eating, comes into two of the essays in this issue—and in two very different ways. In “Kant’s Dinner Party: *Anthropology* from a Foucauldian Point of View,” Peter Melville reads Kant’s late work as a “book of [table] manners,” and, as such, “a kind of antecedent or precursor (albeit a conflicted one) to the more developed critiques of philosophical anthropology found much later in the works of Foucault and Martin Heidegger.” Michael Schnell in “‘The Tasteful Traveller’: Irving’s *The Sketch Book* and the Gustatory Self,” suggests that “*The Sketch Book* takes part in a new economy in which consumption produces a sort of production that provokes rather than satisfies the wish to consume.”

Three essays in this issue, different and exemplary exercises in interdisciplinary work, focus on women’s writing. Susie O’Brien, in “The Garden and the World: Jamaica Kincaid and the Cultural Borders of Ecocriticism,” by way of reading Kincaid’s garden writing, argues for a more critical ecocriticism. Efterpi Mitsi, in “‘Roving Englishwomen’: Greece in Women’s Travel Writing,” examines British women’s travel writing for its compliance with imperialist notions of self and other. Cy-Thea Sand, in “Image, Text, and Spirit: Kate Braid and the Paintings of Emily Carr,” argues, and demonstrates, “that Braid’s poetic encounter with Carr’s images highlights how verbal and visual discourse can work together to conflate the binary opposites of matter and spirit.” This would be a good note on which to begin to read this issue.