

Humanities

[Visited Jun'07] Compiled by Hale (Georgia Perimeter College) for his world literature courses, this site is typical of course-related Web pages, with sections covering biography and background, texts, and criticism. Hale offers relatively little original content and instead relies heavily on a few other sites: *The Perseus Digital Library* (CH, Sup'04, 41Sup-0480), *Diotima* (CH, Sup'06, 43Sup-0590), and *Didaskalia* (CH Sup'06, 43Sup-0176). The links for the latter two are not current, and the links to actual texts are primarily to the outdated and inferior Greek edition of Gilbert Murray and wooden 19th-century translations, with the happy exception of David Kovacs' recent "Loeb Classical Library" translations/texts of a few plays. Criticism focuses on a few commonly studied plays: *Medea*, *The Suppliant Women*, *The Bacchae*, *Orestes*, and *Hippolytus*. Content is thin, with a single essay under each (except for *Medea*, where Hale provides a link to his own *Medea* page; here one finds a number of links to encyclopedia and journal articles, background material on the myth, and images—all suffering from dead links and general lack of attention). This site is too frustrating to be useful; students will do better going directly to the major sites mentioned above. **Summing Up:** Not recommended. —*F. W. Jenkins, University of Dayton*

■ *English & American*

45-0133 PR3588 2006-32803 CIP
 Burbery, Timothy J. *Milton the dramatist*. Duquesne, 2007. 206p index CD ISBN 0820703877, \$58.00; ISBN 9780820703879, \$58.00

This is now the definitive study of John Milton as a dramatist. By examining Milton's biography, Burbery (Marshall Univ.) discovers Milton's probable early interest in drama—he likely went to plays at the Blackfriars Theatre (his father was a trustee)—and the influence of such experience on his works, e.g., *Arcades* and *Comus*. Though these are masques, *Comus* verges on drama, notably in the encounter of the Lady and Comus. Beyond the early work, Burbery cites Milton's plans and outlines to compose a drama on a biblical subject; many of these survive, including an outline concerning Adam's fall. Tentatively titled *Adam Unparadis'd*, this drama was never written but was assimilated into *Paradise Lost*. Burbery uses this important fact as a point of departure for a discussion that highlights how, where, and why Milton embedded dramatic features in his epic. Burbery's analysis of *Samson Agonistes* centers on theatrical elements. Though the work was "never intended for the stage," its characters, gestures, blocking, and the like betoken the "drama" of the poem, which has a venerable stage history (comprehensively provided by Burbery). Well researched, sensitive, circumspect, and insightful, this cogent study illuminates heretofore unrecognized aspects of Milton's oeuvre. **Summing Up:** Essential. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*A. C. Labriola, Duquesne University*

45-0134 PR8797 MARC
 The Cambridge companion to the Irish novel, ed. by John Wilson Foster. Cambridge, 2007 (c2006). 286p bibl index ISBN 0521861918, \$80.00; ISBN 0521679966 pbk, \$29.99; ISBN 9780521861915, \$80.00; ISBN 9780521679961 pbk, \$29.99

Including notes and suggestions for further reading in each chapter, this excellent volume offers a coherent history of the Irish novel. The book begins with a chronology that places Irish fiction in historical/political context, and the essays themselves cover 300 years and all the significant authors, genres, and subgenres. In addition, the critics Foster (emer., Univ. of British Columbia) chose provide perspectives that amply illuminate the variety and complexity of the Irish novel. From 18th-century fiction to the post-moderns, the themes of nation, class, and religion are treated in studies of the big house, the Gothic novel, and other genres. Discussion of women novelists and writers in the Irish language enriches the diversity of the study. Less-known novelists whose work contributes to the fictional whole are treated along with novelists whose influence has had an international impact (James Joyce being an obvious example). Readable and academically sound, this volume will benefit students of the novel as well as those interested in Irish studies. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*M. H. Kealy, Immaculata University*

45-0135 PS309 2006-26217 CIP
 Cavitch, Max. *American elegy: the poetry of mourning from the Puritans to Whitman*. Minnesota, 2007. 352p index afp ISBN 081664893X pbk, \$22.50; ISBN 9780816648931 pbk, \$22.50

Cavitch's lucid study details the genre of the elegiac poem, reminds readers of how poetry once functioned in the work of mourning, and considers the role of poetry in constructing a shared communal experience. Whereas previous studies of this subject—notable among them Mitchell Breitwieser's *American Puritanism and the Defense of Mourning* (CH, May'91, 28-5273)—focus on particular periods, Cavitch (Univ. of Pennsylvania) illuminates the elegiac tradition in American literature that had its roots in Puritan New England, its transformation in incipient nationalism (with the death of George Washington), and its further transformation as it fused with the individual lyricism of the Jacksonian age. Cavitch's critical temperament is both psychological and historical and his readings focus on the imagined community of the early nation and its personal and collective anxiety about loss and futurity. He covers a lot of ground here: Puritan New England, the death of Washington in 1799, Indian removal, William Cullen Bryant, Phyllis Wheatley, African American elegies, and Whitman's elegy to Lincoln, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," with brief excursions in and around other figures from the period. In so doing he rethinks the interstitial space that the elegy constructs between the public and private spheres. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*R. T. Prus, Southeastern Oklahoma State University*

45-0136 PR778 2006-23302 CIP
 Claybaugh, Amanda. *The novel of purpose: literature and social reform in the Anglo-American world*. Cornell, 2007. 246p bibl index afp ISBN 0801444802, \$45.00; ISBN 9780801444807, \$45.00

Mapping the influence of various reform movements on the development of the "novel of purpose," Claybaugh (Columbia Univ.) argues that "realism emerged by struggling against and learning from reformist writings, while the status of the novel and of the novelist were secured by the prestige of reform." The author examines (mainly) canonical British and US authors, pointing out that Charles Dickens, Anne Brontë, and Elizabeth Stoddard comfortably integrated reformist ideals and tropes into their work, particularly the "cautionary temperance tale," but that others struggled with their role as "novelist of purpose." George Eliot's work was pivotal in the transformation of the reformist novel into the novel of purpose, but she disliked being "called on to be a public figure." Mark Twain was pressed by *Atlantic Monthly* editor William Dean Howells to abandon the merely comic for more reformist fiction. And Thomas Hardy wrote *Jude the Obscure* "not to persuade his readers, but rather to outrage and disgust them," to throw off the novelist's role as moral teacher in favor of becoming an artist. Clearly written and well organized, this is an interesting, useful survey of key canonical texts. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers.—*S. C. Robinson, Pacific Lutheran University*

45-0137 PS2172 MARC
 Collister, Peter. *Writing the self: Henry James and America*. Pickering & Chatto, 2007. (Dist. by Ashgate Publishing) 259p bibl index afp ISBN 9781851968718, \$99.00

Collister closely examines the James's hiatus in the US during 1904-05 and the effect that experience had on James during the final decade of his life. James's American tour was extensive and forced James to confront his own youthful ideal about his country of birth. The 20th-century US was far from the US James experienced during his boyhood eastern seaboard idyll of the 1840s-50s, and the author was both repulsed by and drawn to the nation's cacophony and energy. In the US, Collister writes, James found himself "free geographically ... to conceive of interaction between males of homosocial intensity." Thus, he argues, James was liberated by the experience, and in his subsequent work he extended "the available behaviours denoting sexuality or gender." With this assumption firmly in mind, Collister reexamines James's "American" self, using James's *The American Scene* (1907), autobiographical pieces, short stories, and two incomplete novels. In the novels, young male heroes are imbued with "homosocial loyalty" as a response to the apparent vulgarity of the world. This is a refresh-