

UCLA FRENCH DEPARTMENT DISSERTATIONS

Susan B. Delaney. *The Renaissance Lyric Subject: The Poetics of Du Bellay, Ronsard and Scève* (Ph.D. Dissertation: Jean-Claude Carron, Chair, UCLA, 1988)

Many critics view Renaissance poetry as non-expressive and characterize the period as one whose literature is dominated by the principle of imitation. Close analysis of Renaissance texts reveals, however, the presence of a subjective sensibility and a concern for self-generated poetics. In Renaissance poetry as in the period's theoretical treatises, the lyric emerges as a favored medium for the poet's self-representational literary expression. Evidence of this belief lies in the creation, within each writer's *oeuvre*, of a unique existential posture formalized in distinctive stylistic and rhetorical traits.

Part One of the thesis examines the *imitatio* theory put forth by Du Bellay and the Pléiade poets in the *Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse*. This treatise evolves a poetics based on what one might term "originary imitation," a pre-modern theory of self-invention. Part Two studies the lyric phenomenology of the three major poets of the French Renaissance. In their works, Du Bellay, Ronsard and Scève stage their own desire; they position themselves in scenes of alienation (*L'Olive*), aggression (*Les Amours de Marie*) and reciprocity (*Délie*) vis-à-vis the object of their passion.

The consistent poetics governing each writer's lyric stance underscores the possibility of subjective literary experience during the Renaissance. Such poetic self-consciousness marks the Renaissance lyric as a turning point between the genre's classical forebears and its modern successors.

Dominique Isner. *Marcel Proust et l'esthétique des demi-états* (Ph.D. Dissertation: Oreste Pucciani, Chair, UCLA, 1989)

The dissertation entitled "Marcel Proust et l'esthétique des demi-états," uses the ontology and the theories of esthetics, imagination and perception advanced by Jean-Paul Sartre to explore the relationship between consciousness and literary form in Marcel Proust's novel, *Remembrance of Things Past*.

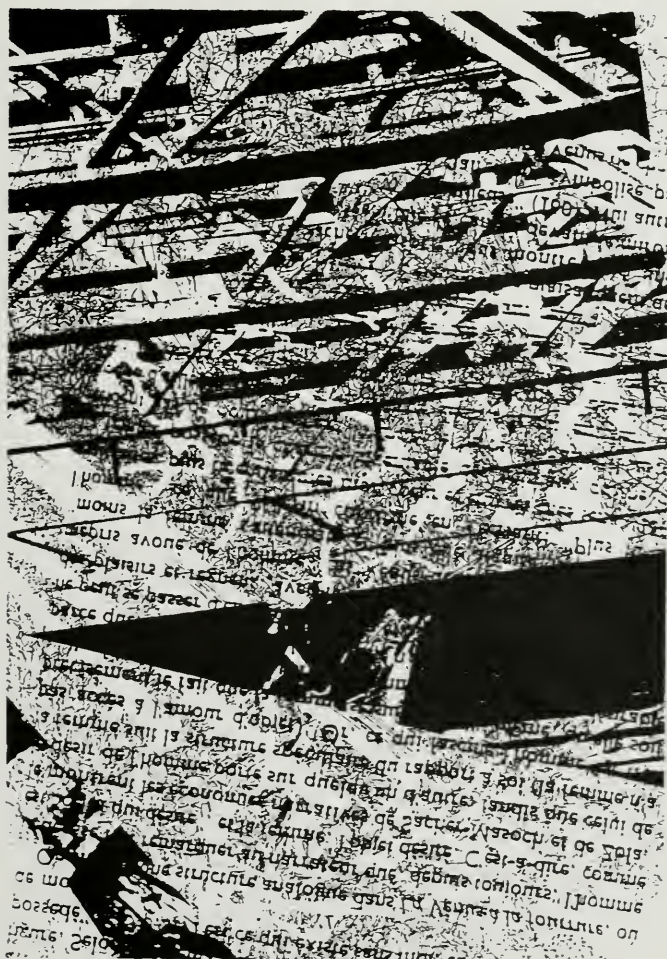
The dissertation has two parts. The first presents the relevant aspects of Sartre's philosophy particularly as advanced in his works *The Imaginary* and *Being and Nothingness*. It then surveys Proust's overall oeuvre, establishing the philosophical and ideological concerns that govern the aesthetics of *Remembrance of Things Past*.

The second part of the dissertation, which focuses exclusively on *Remembrance*, examines in detail the semantic and "phonic" texture of the novel. By analysing selected passages, such as the death of the writer Bergotte and the description of a dress worn by Albertine, the dissertation demonstrates how, behind the apparent linearity of the text, there lurks a shadowy sub-text, composed of a vast network of semantic and phonic associations. This network affects the reader — often at a semi-conscious level — evoking an experience of the phantom-like world between perception and imagination, described by Sartre as the "half-light of consciousness."

The Proustian aesthetic, therefore, springs from and points toward a precarious state of equilibrium, at the meeting point of what Sartre calls "imaging consciousness" and "perceptive consciousness" — hence, it is an aesthetic of "half-states" or "demi-états."

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Ce serait le moment de philosopher et de
rechercher si, par hasard, se trouverait
ici l'endroit où de telles paroles dégèlent.

Rabelais, *Le Quart Livre*

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CONTENTS

ARTICLES

- A l'écoute de la littérature vivante:
An Interview with Lucien Dällenbach 1
Marc-André Wiesmann
- Le discours fantastique de *La Morte amoureuse* 15
Didier Maleuvre
- La Goutte d'or*: autobiographie et littérature 31
Sarah Cordova
- SPECIAL FEATURE: papers from the "UCLA First Annual
Languages & Literature Conference" 41
- Maupassant nouvelliste:
personnage féminin et adultère 43
Evelyne Charvier-Berman
- Le soleil et l'obscurité:
la connaissance des Antoinettes de Flaubert 51
Cathryn Brimhall
- Les Géorgiques* de Claude Simon:
la particularité de la généralisation 63
Antoinette Sol

