



The Bellum Grammaticale and the Rise of European Literature

Erik Butler

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The now-forgotten genre of the bellum grammaticale flourished in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries as a means of satirizing outmoded cultural institutions and promoting new methods of instruction. In light of works written in Renaissance Italy, ancien régime France, and baroque Germany (Andrea Guarna's *Bellum Grammaticale* [1511], Antoine Furetière's *Nouvelle allégorique* [1658], and Justus Georg Schottelius' *Horrendum Bellum Grammaticale* [1673]), this study explores early modern representations of language as war. While often playful in form and intent, the texts examined address serious issues of enduring relevance: the relationship between tradition and innovation, the power of language to divide and unite peoples, and canon-formation. Moreover, the author contends, the "language wars" illuminate the shift from a Latin-based understanding of learning to the acceptance of vernacular erudition and the emergence of national literature.

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