

Notes on Contributors

ALIDE CAGIDEMETRIO holds the chair of American Literature of the University of Udine. Her recently published works include *Fictions of the Past. Hawthorne and Melville* (1992), and John Davis, *Il capitano Smith e la principessa Pocahontas* (ed., 1995).

VITTORIA INTONTI is associate professor of English language and literature at the University of Bari. She is the author of articles and essays on Bronte, James, Joyce, Lowry, has published a volume on literary modernism (*La parabola del modernismo*, Adriatica, 1993) and edited a book on the art of the short story (*L'arte della short story. Il racconto anglo-americana*, Liguori, 1996). She is currently preparing a volume on James's short fiction.

MAURIZIO ASCARI received his doctorate in English Studies from the University of Florence, with a thesis on the comparative genealogy of the detective novel and the anarchist novel. He has published essays on Henry James, Wilkie Collins, and D.H. Lawrence. He has also edited and translated James's *Breve viaggio in Francia* and *La Musa tragica*, as well as L.P. Hartley's *Il ritratto di Mr. Blandfoot e altri racconti*.

MASSIMO BACIGALUPO holds the chair of American language and literature, Facoltà di Lingue, University of Genoa. He has published articles in *Paideuma. A Journal Devoted to Ezra Pound Scholarship*, of which he is an associate, and in *The Wallace Steuens journal*.

E. MARTIN PEDERSEN is "lenore" of English at the University of Messina. His research focuses on the relations of folklore, literature, language, history, and culture in the U.S.

Abstracts

ALIDE CAGIDEMETRIO, "The Vanishing of Indian Princesses, or the Sentimental Transformation of the Pocahontas Myth"

The Indian Princess is a recurring figure in the sentimental plots of historical novels on the white-Indian conflict in post-revolutionary America. In Susanna Rowson's *Reuben and Rachel* (1798), or in Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827), and Joseph Hart's *Miriam Coffin* (1934), such a figure shares the "vanishing Indian" paradigm of sacrifice and disappearance, but with gendered and racial specifications that define the notions of republican womanhood and monoracial family. By comparing the Indian princess's fictional destiny with that of the sentimental heroine, the essay investigates similarities and differences, and focuses on "rape" as the event whose absence, or presence, provides narrative evidence of the new order in matters of gender and race.

VITTORIA INTONTI, "*The Figure in the Carpet* as an Allegory of Reading".

This essay deals with one of James's tales of 'Literary Life'. A complex and multidimensional tale which here is read as a metaliterary story demanding a metareading. The creative act here is not merely a form of thematic representation as the tale allegorizes its own functioning and has itself *en abime*.

Anticipating the skeptical epistemology of contemporary literature, the tale recounts the uselessness of looking for the "essence", for a single unambiguous meaning.

MAURIZIO ASCARI, "Three Aesthetes in Profile: Gilbert Osmond, Mark Ambient, and Gabriel Nash"

This essay, which is part of a work in progress, opens with a sketch of the *fin de siècle* aesthete, a figure who appears to question some of the basic categories that contribute to shape identity, i.e. nationality, culture, and gender. Against this backdrop, three jarnesian characters play their respective roles: Gilbert Osmond in *The Portrait of a Lady*, Mark Ambient in "The Author of Beltraffio", and Gabriel Nash in *The Tragic Muse*. Their highly individual profiles seem to participate in an underlying dynamics of art, whose axes are defined by opposite poles such as *here* vs. *elsewhere* and *mobility* vs. *immobility*. Thus, these three complex and intriguing characters, who may be seen as "variations" on James's nomadic choice of expatriation, help us to problematize the author's ambivalent relationship to the aesthetic movement and his allegiance to realism.

MASSIMO BACIGALUPO, "I wish he would explain his explanation': Authorial Explication in Wallace Stevens and Ezra Pound"

Writers often explicate their work, but their comments are not necessarily trustworthy. Strictly speaking, they are new statements that need themselves to be interpreted and that bear a problematic relationship to the text they propose to explicate. This is shown by examples from Stevens and Pound, both notably obscure writers who, like other modernists, often provided readers with authorial explications. While their attitudes were different, and Stevens insisted that "the basis of criticism is the work, not the hidden intention of the writer", both ultimately fell back on their individual (realistic) perception of the world. They were also alike in being finally impatient with requests for explanation, being much more concerned with the work ahead - with "Making It New".

E. MARTIN PEDERSEN, "Ending the Yarn"

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the yarn - that rambling, digressive humorous narrative type of which Mark Twain was an undisputed master - is its ending. Lacking the satisfying conclusion of the folk tale, the yarn peters out; it runs out of steam; it builds up to an understated let-down anticlimax. By enumerating six types of yarn endings, this paper attempts an explanation for this curious textual and performance feature. The essay examines texts from folklore and literature, including oral sources, but it also analyzes the linguistic, psychological, and socio-cultural contexts and functions of this intentionally weak closure to the great American story.