

Notes on Contributors

MARIA CARMELA COCO DAVANI teaches English Language and Literature at the University of Palermo. Her field of study is the semantics and semiotics of Anglo-american twentieth century literature and theatre production. Her publications include *Il segno polivalente: poesia di Theodore Roethke* (1971), *Il teatro di T. S. Eliot* (1973), *Godot il crack del codice* (1977), *La mappa perduta: la poesia di Anne Sexton* (1984), and an edition of *Il teatro di Edward Bond* (1985).

GUIDO FINK, formerly professor of Italian in various American universities, and of American Literature in Pescara and Bologna, is currently Professor of English Literature at the University of Florence. His main fields of research are Jewish-American Literature and the relationship between literature and film. Among his most recent publications, *William Wyler* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1989); *Guida alla lettura del Dottor Jekyll e Mr. Hyde* (Torino: Lindau, 1990); *Storia della letteratura americana* (with M. Maffi, F. Minganti and B. Tarozzi; Firenze: Sansoni, 1991). He is co-editor, with Seymour Chatman, of *Michelangelo Antonioni's "L'avventura"* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1989), with Gabriella Morisco of *Memoria e tradizione nella cultura ebraico-americana* (Bologna: Clueb, 1990), and with Daniela Fink of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Leggende del palazzo del Governatore* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1990).

FEDORA GIORDANO, tenured researcher in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Rome, has published essays on contemporary American poetry (G. Kinnell, N. Tarn), on archetypal criticism (J. London, J. Ciardi, F. Prokosch, P. Gunn Allen), on Afro-American literature (J. Toomer, I. Reed) and on exoticism and primitivism under the editorship of Elémire Zolla. She is the author of a book on American avant-gardes and Native

American oral traditions, *Etnopoetica* (1988), and is the associate editor of the *European Review of Native American Studies*.

VALERIA GENNARO LERDA is associate professor of North American History at the University of Genova, A.I.S.N.A. vice-president, Board member of the E.A.A.S. Southern Studies Forum, appointed member of the International Committee of the Southern Historical Association (U.S.A.). Her fields of research are the U.S. postbellum South, and reform movements and utopian experiments in the U.S. and Canada. Her publications include *Il populismo americano* (Rome, 1981; 1984), *Città e campagne nell'Eta Dorata; gli Stati Uniti tra utopia e riforma* (editor and contributor; Rome, 1986); *From "Melting Pot" to Multiculturalism: The Evolution of Ethnic Relations in the United States and Canada* (editor; Rome, 1990); *The United States South: Regionalism and Identity* (editor and contributor; Rome, 1991).

TILLIE OLSEN (Mead or Omaha, Nebraska, 1912 or 1913—"no birth certificate seems to exist," says Ms. Olsen) is the internationally acclaimed author of *Tell Me a Riddle* (1961), a collection of stories; "Requa-I" (1971), part of a novella; and *Yonnonidio. From the Thirties* (1974), a novel. *Silences* (1978) is a long essay on the social and economic causes that stifle literary creativity.

PAOLA RUSSO, after graduating at the University of Perugia, recently completed her doctorate in American Studies at the University of Rome "La Sapienza." She has published essays on Sylvia Plath, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Northrop Frye, witchcraft in XVII century New England, and a book on Hawthorne, *Il bosco delle ninfe* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1991).

Abstracts

MARIA CARMELA COCO DAVANI, "Anne Sexton: The Scene of the Disordered Senses."

In this interpretation, Anne Sexton's poems constitute a transgression of dominant socio-cultural and literary norms and values. The textual analysis highlights the range of imagery produced by "nomination" and the use of daring metaphors, but it ultimately centers on the lexical patterns which can be traced back to each of the poet's major artistic phases.

GUIDO FINK, "'Inesprimere l'esprimibile': tre romanzi americani del 1925."

The simultaneous apparition in 1925 of such different works as Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* is the starting point for a contrastive analysis within the more general issue of the relationship between America and Modernism. Dreiser's omniscient author, Fitzgerald's Jamesian "reflector" and Dos Passos' ellipses and *collages* are obviously quite different narrative strategies. However, the three novels do share common themes and techniques—from the relevance of glance and other visual elements to the cinematic *montage* to the creation of a "scapegoat-hero": in different ways, they may be seen as following (*ante litteram*) Roland Barthes' prescription for modern poetry and prose, that is, *not* to express what could be easily expressed.

FEDORA GIORDANO, "Wendy Rose: le parole dell'assenza."

This essay connects the development of Rose's poetic language with her estrangement from her family's multi-ethnic traditions. Rose's quest for a

Native American and, more recently, for a half-breed identity is explored through the analysis of two recurrent images associated with flight and earth. These reach back to her father's Hopi tradition where woman's creative power is evidenced in the symbols of the butterfly, the dragonfly, of Mother Corn, and of Mother Earth.

VALERIA GENNARO LERDA, "Trasformazione o scomparsa del sistema della piantagione nel Sud post-bellico: recenti interpretazioni della storiografia americana."

Contemporary historiography on the South of the United States is mainly focused on the key problems of change and continuity of the plantation system after the Civil War. This essay traces the debate which originated by C. Vann Woodward's theory of *discontinuity* as it developed in the "new social history" and "new economic history" schools of thought. Although these schools used different methodologies, they did reach some agreement in emphasizing processes of continuity within the former planters' economic and social system.

PAOLA RUSSO, "*Mardi*: cinque partenze senza ritorno."

Certainly the most overlooked of Melville's books, *Mardi* is still a puzzle even for those readers who will not dismiss it either as a continuation of his autobiographical novels or as the foreshadowing of more complex work to come. This essay, while claiming textual autonomy for *Mardi*, investigates the "departure" structures which constitute the original narrative kernel. The novel does not begin just once, but five times at least, leading readers, through different literary paths, to a breathtaking landlessness from which there seems to be no return.