

Contributors

MASSIMO BACIGALUPO, guest editor of this issue of *RSA*, teaches American Literature at Università di Genova. He has recently published an edition of Ezra Pound's *Cantipostumi* (2001), an annotated selection of Emily Dickinson (*Poesie*, 2004), and a book of literary travel, *Grotta Byron* (2001). He has co-organized the XXI Ezra Pound International Conference (Rapallo, July 2005) and participated in the conference "Celebrating Wallace Stevens, The Poet of Poets in Connecticut (University of Connecticut, April 2004).

STEFANO MARIA CASELLA teaches English and American literature at the Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione IULM, Milan-Feltre. He has held fellowships at Clare Hall, Cambridge, and at the Bogliasco Foundation. He has written on Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Modernism, comparative literature (poetry in particular) and translation. His recent work includes five entries in the *Ezra Pound Encyclopaedia* (2005), and a long essay on Eliot and Italy, to be published in the U.S.

GREGORY DOWLING teaches American language and literature at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. His most recent critical work is *Someone Road's Home: Questions of Home and Exile in American Narrative Poetry*. He translates regularly and has published four crime novels.

FERDINANDO FASCE teaches Contemporary History at the Università di Genova. His publications include *An American Family. The Great War and Corporate Culture in America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002) and "Family, Big Business, Public Sphere: Public Relations at Du Pont in the Interwar Years," in *Public and Private in American History*, ed. Raffaella Baritono et al. (Torino: Otto, 2003).

ANTONELLA FRANCINI is Faculty Associate of Literature at Syracuse University in Florence. Her recent publications include an anthology of American poetry (*Antologia della poesia americana*, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2004), volumes by Mina Loy (*Poesie ed elegie d'amore*, Le Lettere, 2003) and Yusef Komunyakaa (*Il ritmo delle emozioni*, Liberodiscrivere, 2004), and essays on Charles Wright and translation. She is American poetry editor for the journal *Semicerchio*.

ROBERT HAHN is a poet, essayist, and translator. He is the author of five books of poetry, including *All Clear* (South Carolina) and *No Messages* (Notre

Dame). His essays — on poetry, translation, painting, and film — have appeared in *The Sewanee Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Denver Quarterly*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *The Southern Review*, and *Film Quarterly*. Recent appearances of his poetry include *The Yale Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Chelsea*, *Margie*, and *Keats-Shelley Review*; his translations of Giorgio Caproni have been published in *Modern Poetry in Translation* (England). He has received numerous awards, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and, most recently, from the MacDowell Foundation for work-in-progress on the painting of Tintoretto and cinquecento Venice. He is based in Boston. More information is available at www.roberthahn.net.

SALVATORE MARANO is associate professor of American Literature at the Università di Catania. A translator of Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Antony Burgess, and others, he has written extensively on the subject of literature as play and game, and on modernist and postmodernist authors such as Amy Lowell, Wallace Stevens, E.E. Cummings, William Faulkner, Alice B. Toklas, Gertrude Stein, Walter Abish, John Barth, Margaret Atwood and bp Nichol. He is currently involved in a research project on the technology of writing and its relationship with twentieth century poetry and poetics.

PIA MASIERO MARCOLIN teaches at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. She has written on William Faulkner, Henry James, Nathaniel Hawthorne and others. She is presently working on Paul Auster and Philip Roth.

PAOLA A. NARDI graduated at Università Cattolica, Milano, with a thesis on urban space in Edith Wharton. She completed her Ph.D. in American Literature with a dissertation on space in the poetry of Marianne Moore, and now teaches English at Università Cattolica. She has published essays on Thom Gunn and Edith Wharton.

PATRICIA THOMPSON RIZZO teaches English in the Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Anglo-Germaniche, Università di Padova. A graduate of George Washington University with an MA from Columbia University, she has taught English in various countries, including the USA, Spain, and Australia. She has published on Australian Aboriginal writers, Tillie Olsen, William Faulkner and Emily Dickinson's reception in Italy. For the past few years she has been working on Dickinson's correspondence and this article is part of a work in progress which analyses letters written to some of her closest correspondents.

Abstracts

MASSIMO BACIGALUPO, *History and the American Poet*

According to a critical tradition that goes back to Aristotle, poetry is "more philosophic" than history. American poets from Joel Barlow onward have always taken history as their province, and the Modernists have famously attempted long poems that are historical in scope ("an epic is a poem including history;" as Ezra Pound announced). Poets of today are more modest in their ambition, yet their poems are historical documents through which we can approach American society, and which U.S. readers still respond to as guides to their own experience. Charles Wright's "Archaeology" and its appearance in cyberspace is an example, in being both intimate and public. Present reactions to some of the main historical questions faced by poets are considered in the light of two recent (2005) conferences on Ezra Pound and Wallace Stevens, writers who offered more and less direct purchases on history. WW2 is a test-case of their reactions. Pound responds immediately to the drama, Stevens seeks within it a general (ergo "more philosophic") truth.

STEFANO MARIA CASELLA, *"Empty Silences": T. S. Eliot and Eugenio Montale*

Eliot's "Silence" (1910) and Montale's "Forse un mattino andando in un'aria di vetro" (1923) record all extraordinary experience, a privileged epiphany, in short a "moment in and out of time," typical both of the young poet of St. Louis and of his younger Genoese counterpart, in their early search for the absolute. After giving an account of the poems' critical reception, the article stresses the mythical theme of initiation. The man who has undergone such an experience, like the "mystes" of classic tradition, is completely transformed by it. The essay also offers a stylistic, thematic, and inter-

textual analysis of the poems, and argues that they prefigure much of the poetics of Eliot and Montale. Their beginning was already inscribed their end.

GREGORY DOWLING, *Living outside the Blast: Andrew Hudgins After the Lost War*

Andrew Hudgins published his narrative poem, *After the Lost War*, in 1988. This essay attempts to see whether this work, set in and after the Civil War, can be considered as belonging to a tradition of American historical narrative verse. In the 19th century various poets endeavoured to bestow dignity on episodes of American history by celebrating them in verse, but few of these works are now considered canonical. Hudgins's poem is perhaps more fruitfully to be seen as a work by a contemporary writer who has learned the lessons of Modernism, with its emphasis on concentration of effect, but who is nonetheless attracted to the possibilities of extended narrative. The success of his work depends to a great degree on his adoption of an intensely focused point of view and on his handling of the narrative voice; by convincing us of the reality of his central character, he involves us directly in the historical episodes he so sensitively evokes.

FERDINANDO FASCE, *Politics as a Commodity From Eisenhower to Bush Jr.: Half a Century of Commercial Communication and Election Campaigns in the United States*

The increasing role played by the so-called "political consultants" and "campaigns strategists," applying marketing techniques to promote candidates in current elections, points to a serious gap in the historical literature of U.S. political culture. Surprisingly understudied remains the historical background of this recent development, which is rooted in the evolution of commercial communication over the second half of the twentieth century. The

long-term perspective adopted in the present article shows how, and with what effects on public discourse, admen, PR, and "political consultants" came to dominate presidential campaigning and made effective inroads into governance as well.

ANTONELLA FRANCINI, *Sonnet vs. Sonnet: the Fourteen-Lines in African American Poetry. A Survey*

The essay analyses the sonnet form as practiced by African American poets in the course of the 20th century. It focuses on the way they have used the fourteen-line structure, turning it into a vehicle of communication, a forum for dynamic argumentation of social and political themes. In making it one of their chosen modes of expression, African American poets have succeeded in recovering the sonnet's original function, giving this metrical form new vitality. Its evolution is traced from the Romantics to contemporary authors, with special attention to the "protest sonnets" of Claude McKay, the war sonnets of Gwendolyn Brooks, and recent experimentations by Rita Dove and Yusef Komunyakaa.

SALVATORE MARANO, *Still Life with Machine: E.E. Cummings's Typewriter Poems*

Focused on the paradigmatic shift brought about by the typewriter on the compositional habits of Cummings, the paper explores the interrelations between the history of technology and his poetry. A poet and a painter in the belated tradition of the Preraphaelites, Cummings was nevertheless fascinated by the poetics of the machine advocated by Modernism. As a result, he developed the unique features of his style through the relentless exploitation of what Heidegger called an "intermediate thing between a tool and a machine." As a matter of fact, the *prosody for the eye* of his visual pieces is a direct consequence of the restrictions imposed by the typewriter. The page itself, used as a unit of composition, becomes the site where semantic units take form in

patterns whose spacing, punctuation and lettering are dictated by the mechanical pace of the carriage. The passage from typescript to typesetting conceals but does not erase the nature of Cummings's operation; however, the same act of concealment reveals the unresolved tension that characterizes his poetics. Always suspended between an inner "arch-Romanticism" (Gioia) and an outer iconoclasm, his poetry of the machine and yet not machine-like stands at the crossroad between the objectivist stance of the Pound-Williams line and the exasperated lyricism of the anarchist-individualist.

PIA MASIERO MARCOLIN, *Notes on/in Paul Auster's "Oracle Night"*

Oracle Night, Paul Auster's twelfth novel, is analysed focusing on the author's peculiar paratextual choices. Drawing on Gerard Genette's seminal grammar of the paratext, *Seuils*, Auster's usage of the title, the dedication and especially of footnotes is here explored as a means to understand some aspects of postmodern referentiality and textual self-sufficiency, such as the relationship between the code of the real and the code of the fictional and the pact with the reader.

PAOLA A. NARDI, *"Taking the Potomac Cowbirdlike": History Through Space in Marianne Moore*

Since her college years at Bryn Mawr, where she majored in both History and Politics, Marianne Moore was always extremely conscious of contemporary society and deeply immersed in history. In this essay I focus on Moore's relation to American history through the analysis of two poems, "New York" and "Virginia Britannia," that I consider as parallel both for their theme and communicative strategy. Although one is short and the other rather long, one is centred in the New York area and the other in Jamestown and Virginia, one was published in 1921 and the other in 1935, both works offer an overview

of the development of the United States from the colonial years to Moore's day, most interestingly using space as a tool to present and relate the past.

PATRICIA THOMPSON-RIZZO, "Gone-to-Kansas": *A Reading of Dickinson's L182*

Written when the poet was 25, and as far as we know when she had composed only a handful of poems, this Emily Dickinson letter is analysed in order to demonstrate its intrinsic value as an outstanding instance of her early production and literary skill. The 1856 letter displays features, themes, concepts and wordings that are to reappear fully developed in her later work. This text describes the family's move from North Pleasant Street back to the larger mansion on Main Street, where they had originally lived until the poet was thirteen years old. The move, ambitiously pursued by her father, Squire Dickinson, is hyperbolically described as a major enterprise and practically compared to the relocation of emigrants to the strife-torn Kansas territory. Its imaginative critique of America's expansionist aims and the misguided optimism of Antebellum America provides an example of the way Dickinson subtly engaged in the feminist discourse defined by Amy Kaplan as "Manifest Domesticity."