

Editor's Note

This issue of RSA Journal focuses upon contemporary American literature and the present state of the publishing world in the United States. By no means do we aspire to give a comprehensive picture of the American literary scene a few years before the end of the twentieth century. Still, the contributions here included offer a variety of perspectives upon what is happening in America today as concerns literary creativity in its interaction with the cultural realities -- social, economic and political -- that constitute its context.

Massimo Bacigalupo and Roberto Maria Dainotto present, respectively, John Ashbery and Robert Coover, a poet and a novelist firmly established within the American literary mainstream. Franca Bacchiega introduces Leo Romero, an "ethnic" poet of Chicano origin whose work is yet unknown in Italy. Anna Secco and Daniela Daniele discuss in their respective articles N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Silko and Louise Erdrich, three major Native American writers whose works span the gap between mainstream and border cultures. (Native American writing and its relation to mainstream literature will receive further attention in forthcoming issues of our journal, beginning with issue No. 4.)

A sizeable portion of the present issue is devoted to the transcript of a round table on "Literary Creativity and the Publishing Industry" organized by RSA Journal in New York on November 20, 1992. The participants were authors Roberta Kalechofsky, Gordon Lish, Hugh Nissenson and Cynthia Ozick; Robert Boyers, Editor-in-Chief of Salmagundi; and Elisabeth Sifton, former editor and imprint publisher with Alfred Knopf and currently Senior Vice President at Farrar, Straus and Giroux. This lively, candid, at times idiosyncratic, purposely asystematic discussion touches upon a wide range of related topics such as the impact of market considerations upon the writer, the influential role of The New York

Times Book Review and The New York Review of Books, the structural changes recently undergone by the publishing industry, the function of independent bookstores, the responsibilities inherent in the role of the editor and the complexities of the relationship between author and publisher. The discussion also touches upon the phenomenon of the small presses and upon the frustration borne by both the writers and the publishers who find themselves excluded by the mainstream publishing world. RSA Journal is most grateful to all the participants in the round table for the generous giving of their time and sharing of their ideas. Particular thanks are due to Miss Ozick, Mrs. Kalechofsky and Mr. Boyers, who travelled to New York expressly to be with us. Thanks are also due to Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Burton for graciously allowing us the use of their living room.

Our tradition of enriching each issue of RSA Journal by featuring a hitherto unpublished work by an American author continues with the presentation of "Myra Is Dying," a beautiful short story by Roberta Kalechofsky. For this, also, we are grateful to Mrs. Kalechofsky.

RSA Journal 3 closes with an act of atonement. In our previous issue, the last stanza and a half of Nathaniel Tarn's "Bartok in Udaipur" were unaccountably dropped. By presenting the poem in its entirety we now attempt to rectify our mistake. We deeply regret this unfortunate incident and offer Mr. Tarn as well as our readers our sincere apologies.

M.M.