



Journal of the Short Story in English

Les Cahiers de la nouvelle

43 | Autumn 2004

Varia

Foreword

John H. E. Paine and Corinne H. Dale



Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/jsse/401>

ISSN: 1969-6108

Publisher

Presses universitaires de Rennes

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 September 2004

Number of pages: 9-10

ISSN: 0294-04442

Electronic reference

John H. E. Paine and Corinne H. Dale, « Foreword », *Journal of the Short Story in English* [Online], 43 | Autumn 2004, Online since 05 August 2008, connection on 03 December 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/jsse/401>

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Foreword

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- 1 The eight essays of this Fall, 2004 issue of *Journal of the Short Story in English* investigate social formation and cultural conflict in short fiction set in Anglo and Anglo-American cultures. These fictional representations include the development and abuse of social class within England, Orientalism in colonial North Africa, immigrant assimilation and gender construction in North America, as well as fictionalized biographical accounts dealing with identity-formation in ethnic, class, and family groups. Together the essays not only represent a wide variety of cultural approaches to literature, but also demonstrate the importance of cultural criticism in reading fiction.
- 2 Tim Killick in “Mary Russell Mitford and the Topography of Short Fiction” explores how Mitford in *Our Village* uses various short prose forms to engage the social and physical geography of the British countryside of the early nineteenth century, thus challenging the hegemony of the novel.
- 3 Bernard Gilbert’s “‘The Signalman’ de Dickens” suggests that here Dickens, rather than presenting a simple ghost story, is offering a detective story with serious moral and political undertones and a critique of English class oppression.
- 4 Charlotte Rich, in “Fictions of Colonial Anxiety: Edith Wharton’s ‘The Seed of the Faith’ and ‘A Bottle of Perrier,’” suggests that these lesser-known Wharton stories, set in North Africa, hint at undermining the Orientalist discourse of her time, but that they ultimately confirm the cultural dynamics in her travel writing and thus her complicity in the Euro-American colonial enterprise.
- 5 The function of humor in constructing Jewish-immigrant identity in late-nineteenth-century America is the subject of Jason P. Sneed’s “Joke-Making Jews: Humor and Identity in Abraham Cahan’s novella *Yekl*.” Sneed argues that humor presides over relations both within the minority ethnic group and also between members of this group and those outside it. Humor in this work by Cahan may facilitate either the individual’s assimilation into the majority culture his/her alienation from the minority, and thus it becomes an important means of constructing cultural identity.
- 6 James Plath, in “On a Fairy’s Wing: Hints of Fitzgerald in Hemingway’s ‘The Butterfly and the Tank,’” offers evidence that Hemingway, weary of Fitzgerald’s bad behavior and

his complaints about having missed the big war, inserts a Fitzgerald-like character into this story to express in a veiled way his opinion of Fitzgerald's cowardice and social arrogance.

- 7 In "A Farewell to Goodbyes: Reconciling the Past in Cheever's 'Goodbye My Brother'," Peter Mathews argues that the center of concern is each brother's problematic relationship to the past. The narrator must finally come to realize that his brother Lawrence's relationship to their family's history is the cause for the long series of goodbyes of which his life has consisted. It is this realization which brings the narrator at last to a reconciliation with his brother and with his own past.
- 8 Greg Bentley offers a fresh reading of a well-known story in "Sammy's Erotic Experience: Subjectivity and Sexual Difference in John Updike's 'A & P.'" Bentley develops the notion that Sammy, in witnessing the scene at the A& P, experiences an authentic rite of passage which takes him beyond the male-female boundaries dictated by conventional masculinity to an empowered subjectivity composed of positive masculine and feminine qualities.
- 9 Lastly, Christiane Desafy-Grignard's "Jewishness and Judaism Revisited in Two Short Stories by Arthur Miller: 'Monte Sant'Angelo' and 'I Don't Need You Anymore'" discusses Miller's figuring of his own Jewish identity in these two autobiographical stories.