



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



SPECIAL SECTION: ABSTRACTS

Bacchilega, Cristina, Rieder John

HISTORY AND ITS OTHERS IN AFROFUTURISM

Afrofuturist fiction proceeds from the position of an enslaved, silenced, subaltern Other within the history of the US. It responds by constructing various strategic discontinuities with historical time, including anachronism, apocalypse, and utopia. This talk will survey the use of these narrative strategies in Afrofuturist work by Sun Ra, Octavia Butler, Andrea Hairston, and in the recent anthology of activist science fiction, *Octavia's Brood*.

Bordin, Elisa

“WHERE DID WE GO FROM THERE?": *BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD'S* RESISTANCE TO CIVIL LIFE

After 50 years from the battles for civil equality in the United States, this essay analyzes the film *Beats of the Southern Wild* (2012) and its African American characters' refusal to participate into the civic life of their country. As a consequence of a hurricane that reminds of Katrina, the isolated community of Bathtub is forced to enter into contact with civic institutions with deleterious effect on both Hushpuppy, the 6-year-old protagonist, and her father. While the passage to civilized life has deadly consequences on the man's precarious health conditions, Hushpuppy is forcedly transformed into an example of mainstream femininity. In this way, *Beasts of the Southern Wild* casts doubt on the importance of civic belonging as a rewarding act in one's life. At the beginning of the new millennium, in years that are defined as post-civil rights as well as post-racial, the film shows the oppressive force of civil life and the state, which transforms rights into abuse of personal choices and lifestyle.

Bosco, Stefano

VISUALIZING BLACK LEADERSHIP: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE IN TWO CONTEMPORARY GRAPHIC NOVELS

Over the last few decades, the genre of the graphic novel has known an unprecedented diffusion as a viable aesthetic form through which its creators can vehicle cultural and political discourses. Especially in the hands of artists belonging to social and racial minorities, the medium has displayed a crucial potential for undermining the master narratives of the dominant (i.e. white) culture, whose traditions of textual *and* visual representation contributed to the normalization of oppression and exclusion. As they did for other genres of the white American tradition, black artists have recently started to employ graphic narratives so as to question biased views on the African



American past, along with the legacy of racialized images through which blacks have been portrayed. Strictly connected to such concern with history and its re-formulation in a predominantly visual medium, there is also an involvement in personal or (auto-)biographical narratives where the self becomes the prism through which one approaches the events and collective experiences defining a particular historical moment. In the case of African-American representations, this biographical element takes up a special resonance for its recalling the tradition of the slave narratives—a genre which was in an already problematic relationship with the ideological uses of white American life-writing. What I am going to explore here is the declination of African-American historical biography within the form of the graphic novel; I will do so by considering two works that thematize black experience during the Civil Rights Movement in different ways and with different purposes—the graphic memoir *March*, by African American Congressman John Lewis, and the graphic biography *King* by Afro-Canadian artist Ho Che Anderson.

Corrizzato, Sara

STRATEGIES OF GLOCALIZATION IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION: DUBBING AVA DUVERNAY'S SELMA INTO ITALIAN.

Thirty years on from the exemplary three Selma to Montgomery marches led by Martin Luther King, Ava DuVernay directed the production of a featured movie, *Selma*, which portrays the complex events that persuasively contributed to the recognition of African Americans' right to vote. The aim of the film was to celebrate the enormous effort that Martin Luther King and his supporters made in the fight for getting the Civil Rights Acts passed that same year. With the aim of analysing how, and to what extent, King's oratory skill is exploited to shaping and consequently introducing the iconic figure to the source as well as to the target audience, this essay focuses on Martin Luther King's linguistic choices both in public speeches and in more private communicative exchanges. The linguistic approach, including a comparative analysis of the two versions, will also shed light on the most relevant changes that the adaptation process for Italian viewers brought about. Such discrepancies (though apparently slight) will prove to be decisively influential in the construction of King's and other characters' identities to the point that target viewers can actually encounter 'different' characters than in the original version.

Franceschi, Valeria

REMEMBERING THE REVEREND: AN ANALYSIS OF OBAMA'S SPEECHES COMMEMORATING MARTIN LUTHER KING

In the wake of the 50th anniversary of the Selma-Montgomery marches, the memory of Martin Luther King and his struggles for equality still survives in the minds of American citizens. The echo



of his actions and words endures pervasively in Barack Obama's own rhetoric; a connection between King and Obama was drawn when the latter became a serious contender for the nomination as a Democratic candidate in early 2007, due to their shared ethnicity as African-Americans and to the historical significance of having a strong African-American candidate running for the presidency. This study investigates how metaphors and myths are employed in Martin Luther King's and Obama's rhetoric from a cognitive linguistic perspective, by applying conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Fauconnier and Turner 1994, 1998) applied to political discourse analysis (Charteris-Black 2004, 2011, 2014). The analysis is carried out on 7, speeches delivered by Obama between 2006 and 2015, with the purpose of remembering and celebrating the achievements and activism of Martin Luther King. Results show how Obama builds and expands on the ideas and myths employed by King in his own speeches to create support for himself as a dependable and rightful leader for America, both before and after his election to office.

Minganti, Franco

WE AIN'T GOT ENOUGH. LE MUSICHE DEI DIRITTI CIVILI DA MARIAN ANDERSON A JOHN LEGEND (E KAMASI WASHINGTON)

Given that "the civil rights movement without its music would have been like a bird without its wings", music is more and more often acknowledged for being the backbone to the struggles for the civil rights in the US, from the mid-fifties through the mid-sixties. The essay points to the mix of Black music styles – spirituals from the Black Church, union folk songs, soul hits, popular music and even jingles – that often crossed over into each other, offering a complex body of music that often defied an ill-perceived color line. Some examples are offered that provide new food for thought about the folk revival style of African American singer-songwriters like Len Chandler and Jim Collier, about Aretha Franklin's 1967 recording session at Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals, about the overlooked Wattstax event (and film) that took place at the Los Angeles Coliseum in 1972 (featuring Reverend Jesse Jackson, a roster of Stax artists and blaxploitation icons like Isaac Hayes and Melvin Van Peebles), and about the debated transformations in the singing of the national anthem.

Renna, Dora

THE ROUTE TO IDENTITY: ITALIAN TRANSLATION AND AFRICAN AMERICAN LANGUAGE(S) IN SPIKE LEE'S *GET ON THE BUS*

This paper investigates translation issues emerging from the analysis of Spike Lee's movie *Get on the Bus* (1996) and its Italian adaptation, *Bus in Viaggio*. The choice is motivated by African American Vernacular English (AAVE), used in the film by a group of men that get on the bus to reach the Million Man March in Washington (1995). During the journey, characters will confront



each other on different topics, such as African American male identity in that precise moment and for the future, as well as their role within the black community. As in other movies by Spike Lee, the traditional and stereotyped media portrayal of African American people is challenged and subverted. This dialogical construction poses a set of challenges for the translator/adaptor, especially because it is characterised by a use of language that has no equivalent in Italian. (Un)translatability is the main focus of this research: can idiomatic expressions that are typical of a non-standard variety of English be translated? Which translation strategies have been used? These questions will be analysed through a reading of the speech patterns enacted by one of the characters, the wannabe Hollywood star Flip, a stereotyped portrait against whom each character will fight in order to affirm his identity.

Scacchi, Anna

“IF YOU GO THERE—YOU WHO WAS NEVER THERE”: CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES OF SLAVERY AND THE MEMORY OF THE PAST

Kenneth Warren, in his controversial *What Was African American Literature?* (2011), argues that while African American literature was once “prospective,” contemporary black writing is “retrospective” and its obsessive preoccupation with the past is the result of nostalgia for the supposedly unified and cohesive black community of Jim Crow times and unwillingness to accept the disappearance of racial particularity after the end of legally sanctioned racial segregation. While some of his points are well taken, nostalgia for the past is not behind the current rememory of slavery in literature, the arts and popular culture. “I know I can’t change the future but I can change the past. It is the past, not the future, which is infinite,” replied Toni Morrison to a question about the genesis of *Beloved*. By changing the past, however, she aims at changing the future. Neo-slave narratives are works that rewrite the past in order not only to set the historical records straight, but also to heal the collective memory through narrative so that an authentically post-racial community can come into existence. They challenge the divide between past and present, to counter Western amnesia of the traumas of colonization and slavery.

Spallino, Chiara

IN PRINCIPIO ERA IL SUONO. LA LINGUA PERDUTA DELLE MADRI NELLA NARRATIVA DI TONI MORRISON

The essay aims to analyze Toni Morrison’s daring linguistic experimentation through her narrative use of sound, accurately chosen as a strategy to explore and possibly re-discuss, the concepts of race and gender at the core of her narratives. Specific attention will be drawn to the language of the mothers and their consequent use of sounds and words, filled with multiple meanings, seen as a fundamental tool capable of healing and reaffirming, to a certain extent, an African-American



identity.

By way of conclusion, the essay will mostly consider the figure of the mother in *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Beloved* (1987) through Morrison's attention to the sounds of language.

Taronna, Annarita

BLACK POWER IS BLACK LANGUAGE. LE LINGUE DEL GHETTO COME PRATICHE DI RESISTENZA

Drawing on the debate on African American English, this paper will explore two pivotal aspects of the issue: the necessary tracing back of the origins and the context that gave birth to Black language as a fundamental issue for a specific social reality, and the identification of those peculiarities (phonetic, morpho-syntactic and lexical) not only proving the complexity of its linguistic status and its diversity from standard English, but also representing all its strength. In particular, by connecting African American Diaspora to more recent trans-Mediterranean routes, the theoretical framework will focus on the creation of new geo-localities and linguistic identities emerged from the multilayered contaminations brought about by global cultural flows. From a linguistic point of view a meaningful example of this process of contact and contamination is the form of Black English used in Italy by some second-generation immigrants as a pidgin adapted to specific communicative purposes that exceed linguistic, national and geographical borders. More specifically, the research will analyze Karima 2G's aesthetics that might help re-construct the linguistic and cultural history of the color line in Italy through her history of second-generation Liberian-Italian using rap and Black English to open a transatlantic vision of the traces left by the African Diaspora.

Venturini, Nadia

DIRITTO DI VOTO E ALFABETIZZAZIONE. BERNICE ROBINSON E LE *CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS* DELLE SEA ISLANDS

American historiography in the last two decades has been paying growing attention to the contribution of women to the African American Freedom Struggle. Women were often the main agents in grassroots experiences, delving on their deep connections to local communities, where they were involved on many levels, including friendship networks or church activities. The experience of Bernice Robinson (1914-1994) is telling in that line: after leaving her native Charleston in her youth, she returned after the war, due to family obligations, carrying the experience of integrated life in New York. She relied on the two trades she had learned in New York, as a seamstress and beautician. She was an active member of NAACP, besides being the cousin of a more widely known activist, Septima P. Clark, who had been fired from her position as a teacher because of NAACP membership. Clark first took her cousin to the interracial Highlander Folkschool, Tennessee, along with an activist from Johns Island, Esau Jenkins. This experience



brought to a bold experiment in the education of illiterate adults in the Sea Islands, stretching along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia: the site of an outstanding grassroots experiment in the late '50s and early '60s. Basic literacy for adults was taught, with the aim of getting them registered for voting, starting with a small class in January 1957, when the literacy test was still the main instrument for excluding African American Southerners from the ballots. Robinson accepted to be a non-professional teacher on the Sea Islands, while keeping her business running in Charleston. She successfully developed original methods for teaching adults. Within a few years she became a full-time activist, holding workshops around the South, cooperating with both SCLC and SNCC. The Citizenship Schools project in 1961 was administered by SCLC, and it spread in the whole South, totaling 900 classes led by non-professional teachers, coordinated by Clark, and 700.000 registrations before VRA was enacted. After the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Robinson's experience proved valuable for other organizations involved in literacy projects for migrants. Her personality is a good example of the way in which Southern African American women could develop strategies for civil rights in a very difficult political context, still widely imbued with male chauvinism.

GENERAL SECTION: ABSTRACTS

Adami, Valentina, Logaldo, Mara

NOT SO PRETTY: DISCOURSES ABOUT MODELS' RIGHTS

This essay analyses a corpus of online articles dealing with models' rights collected in the press section of the "Model Alliance" website. The articles (about 60, plus the related blogs and forums) were originally published in various newspapers and magazines between 2010 and 2013, and they are an interesting object of analysis for the linguist who intends to investigate how language is used to build up semantically and syntactically coherent forms of discourse about social and cultural issues that are perceived as yet "unexplored." The analysis develops along two main lines: 1. a quantitative and qualitative lexical analysis based on semantic fields theory and discourse analysis, during which ten key topics (age, education, health, body, work, money, rights, law, sex, power) were identified and then grouped together into five semantic fields and 2. the use of semantic, morphological and rhetorical strategies, with particular emphasis on forms of negativization as well as on the use of modifiers, prefixes and suffixes. The study has confirmed the hypothesis that journalistic language needs to find a "voice" when dealing with new and contested topics. In fact, particularly in the first phase (2010-2012), journalistic discourses about models' rights presented a more tentative style compared to more consolidated subjects covered in news reports.

Bergamini, Oliviero



UNA SQUADRA DI RIVALI: HILARY CLINTON SEGRETARIO DI STATO

This article looks at the figure Hilary Clinton as Secretary of State during Obama's presidency through her political choices rooted also in a substantial difference of conception with the President's attitude toward foreign policy. Although Clinton's image as Secretary of State has been described as essentially rigid and extremely aggressive in her political choices, compared to the policy imposed by Obama, a more careful analysis of her political maneuvering shows how Clinton largely recalibrated and reinvented American foreign policy after Bush's somewhat reckless initiatives.

Degani, Marta

ENDANGERED INTELLECT: A CASE STUDY OF CLINTON VS TRUMP CAMPAIGN DISCOURSE

This study investigates political language and political discourse with a focus on anti-intellectualism that is interpreted from two different but related perspectives. First, anti-intellectualism is seen as related to linguistic complexity as measured by certain textual features (e.g. sentence length, word length, number of complex words). Secondly, anti-intellectualism is seen as connected to characteristics of discourse such as representation of Self, representation of Other and framing of political issues. This integrated approach to the examination of anti-intellectualism in American political language and discourse is based on both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis, and it is used for investigating Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's announcement speeches. The purely quantitative analysis relies on a range of well-known readability tests (Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease, Flesch Kincaid Grade Level, Gunning Fog Score, SMOG Index, Coleman Liau Index, Automated Readability Index, New Dale-Chall Readability Index and Fry Graph) to account for the linguistic complexity of the political speeches as a measure of their anti-intellectualism. The qualitative analysis utilizes methods of Corpus Linguistics to identify keywords in each of the political texts and relies on a Critical Discourse Analysis framework to investigate the impact of lexical choice on the construction of political and social reality.

Elia, Adriano

"THE GREAT NEAR": POSSIBLE WORLDS IN W.E.B. DU BOIS'S *THE PRINCESS STEEL*

W.E.B. Du Bois's short story *The Princess Steel* (c. 1908) is a significant example of proto-Afrofuturist speculative fiction functioning as a powerful allegory on the origins of modern capitalistic industry. An original hybrid narrative form, *The Princess Steel* combines to great effect disparate genres such as literary realism, romance and science fiction. Using a series of



intertwining plots, Du Bois developed a clear-cut political statement that on the one hand, through irony, denounces the stigmatization of black people, and on the other, through the parable of the Princess Steel, prophetically directs acute criticism towards the degeneration of colonial exploitation and industrial capitalism.

Frigeni, Enrico

WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOU UNDERTAKE TO OVERTHROW OUR UNDERTAKING." SULLA CRITICA CUBISTA DELLE OPERE DI GERTRUDE STEIN

The article takes into account the way in which Gertrude Stein's literary works have been interpreted by critics over the years. Following the writer's own cue, scholars – starting with Stein's long-time friend and admirer, Mable Dodge – have been inclined to view her baffling and sometimes obscure writing as an attempt to reproduce, through the literary medium, the project and the creative impulse behind the creation of the cubist avant-garde movement. Given Stein's well-documented friendship with Picasso, literary critics have generally been willing to draw a comparison between the artists' oeuvre in order to shed light on the challenging style of Stein's pieces. Although this critical method has proved very prolific over the years, this paper explores the limitations of such an approach, especially for the interpretation of Stein's post-1914 works (in which her style radically changed). While I discuss how the over-reliance on the cubist interpretative method might lead to inconsistencies in the analysis of her works, I suggest, in the final part of the article, that a parallel between Stein's *Tender Buttons* and Piet Mondrian's neoplastic painterly technique might provide a better frame of reference for the understanding of some of her works.

Gallo, Carmen

LA STORIA AL TEMPO DELLA POLITICA. LE PRODUZIONI TEATRALI DI *TUTTO È VERO* (*ENRICO VIII*) NEL NOVENCENTO

The paper explores the main features of Shakespeare and Fletcher's *All is True, or Henry VIII* (1613) through its twentieth-century productions. The play was included in the famous 1623 Folio among the histories (Fletcher's co-authorship had not been acknowledged yet and it is still debated today) by the editors who probably dismissed the original or alternative title, *All is True*, and adopted *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry VIII* so as to strengthen the contiguities between this late work, revolving around one of the most controversial figure of Tudor dynasty, and the previous histories. Nonetheless, the original title and its insistence on "truth" is constantly alluded throughout the play, whose main theme is the use of propaganda, rumors, slanders and defamation as means of political action. This is probably one of the reasons why in the 20th century a few directors chose this play to reflect on the dynamics of modern politics and on the



rhetoric of politics in the age of information. Their productions may be split into two main scenic readings: a conservative one, faithful to the Shakespearean tradition established by the Victorians and focused on the ceremonialist and nationalist aspects of the play; and a more radical one, which underlines the hypocrisy of modern politics and the emptiness of its propagandistic practices. The paper reconstructs the pivotal moments of the two performative lines, and analyses the main features and the historical contexts of the productions from Gray's direction of the play (1931) until Doran's 1996 e 1998 productions, which significantly restored the title *All is True*.

Giovannone, Daniele

IL RITRATTO E LA SCOPA: RISCrittURA DI HENRY JAMES NEL ROMANZO DI ESORDIO DI DAVID FOSTER WALLACE

Although David Foster Wallace may be the most famous writer of his generation, his first works have been surprisingly neglected by scholars. This study attempts to cast a new light on Wallace's first novel by arguing that it may be a rewriting of *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James' masterpiece. The two novels share many similarities: the more evident of them concern characters and plot elements, but the more meaningful instances can be found in the way they treat the key concepts of reification and human contact. After commenting on Wallace's frequent use of rewriting at the time wrote the novel, the paper employs two main approaches to try to explain the link between the two novels. First, the two authors are linked through a historical analysis where they are portrayed, respectively, as the most prominent ancestor and the latest fruit of the modernist/post-modernist branch of American literature. In the second half, the paper treats the moral implications of the novels, which are linked through the thinking of Martha Nussbaum and her idea of morality. Through this analysis, two authors usually seen mostly as innovators of style reveal their deep interest in a morally engaged literature.

Giroux, Henry

L'ISOLAMENTO COME SPAZIO DI ROTTURA NEL MONDO ACCADEMICO

The aim of this article is to analyze the complexities and the possible outcomes of isolation in the academic world. As it unfolds this essay aims first to consider isolation in academia as a strategy that precludes a space for dialogue, research and quality teaching. Conversely, looking at how isolation might become a disruptive, transformative, emancipatory and pedagogical resource, this article reconsiders the concept as a possible source for re-discussing the reality of academia, thus becoming a possible space for critical dialogue. The ultimate aim of this analysis is to reconsider



the meaning of isolation in academia as a space of possibility that leads to a more evolved and beneficial university.

Hayes, Kevin J.

FIESTA E IL GIRO DEI PAESI BASCHI

The present article focalizes on Hemingway's narrative choice to add to his debut novel, *Fiesta* (1926), "The Basque Country Bike Tour", a bicycle race held in San Sebastian. The essay interrogates Hemingway's narrative choice to use the event in the story as a key moment streamlining the action and simplifying the events as the novel discloses. The final aim is to show how this event has represented an essential strategy to develop the trajectory of the novel thus offering allusions to our contemporary world.

Macedo, Donaldo

THE ETHICS OF LINGUISTIC DEMOCRACY IN SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY

The concern of the present essay is to explore the widely debated topic of educational research, analyzed here from the prohibition of minority languages that have profound implications on an ethical standpoint, going beyond the dichotomy English vs Native language. As the essay aims to show, English-only teaching will only perpetuate the ethnocentric/racist attitude of academic English as the only tolerated language of a privileged community. The article will specifically focus on the condition of Non-English speakers, who will constantly carry a sense of "linguistic otherness" through the perpetration of an English-only teaching, which determines the creation of a linguistic educational stereotype.

Martinez, Pilar

MIND READING AND MIND BLINDNESS IN *THE AGE OF INNOCENCE*. A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

This essay explores Edith Wharton's narrative strategies in *The Age of Innocence* from a cognitive perspective. My purpose is less to describe the cognitive mechanism underlying the act of reading than to reflect on how writers may capitalize on our cognitive proclivities to achieve a certain effect—in this case, surprise. Starting from the notion of "theory of mind" or "mind-reading"—the ability to understand others' outward behavior in terms of underlying mental or emotional states, which, according to some cognitive critics, "makes literature as we know it possible"—I explore the ways in which this cognitive proclivity to read fictional minds can be turned on its head, and into a kind of "mind-misreading." With all its silences and "undertelling," *The Age of Innocence*, it seems, summons the reader's theory of mind proclivities. However, in Wharton's novel the reader's



apparently free “mind-readings” are compromised and manipulated by a fluid focalization and, on the other hand, by an artful use of “mind-blinding” mechanisms that tease our cognitive endowments (together with the protagonist’s), turning an apparently everyday task of mind-reading into an unacknowledged case of (literary) mind-blindness.

Festa Melodia, Beatrice

THE GENDERING OF SPACE: FEMALE STROLLERS ON THE MARKET IN 19TH AND 20TH-CENTURY NEW YORK

The aim of this essay is to provide further insight into the concept of urban walking or, using its literary definition, *flânerie* in America at the dawn of the 20th century. This study aims to discuss the role of the female *flâneuse* walking New York in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In order to broaden understanding of the complex role of women as strollers on the market, faithfully representing America’s social changes at the birth of women’s emancipation, this study compares Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth* (1905) and Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893). Offering a reconsideration of the role of the female *flâneur* in America, these novels, analyze the representation of women as strollers on the market in two similar and yet different social contexts. In light of this, the female *flâneuse* at the turn of the century walks both as a social signifier and as a symbol of a collective psychology, representing America’s social changes. These two literary examples will help us understand this figure, providing us with the tools necessary to trace America’s cultural history and the history of New York City as filtered through the eyes of the *flâneur*. The ultimate aim of this essay is to offer a reconsideration of the image of the female *flâneuse* in America.

Miles, Tiya

OSSA DI CAPRA NEL SOTTERRANEO. UN CASO DI RAZZA, GENERE E VISITAZIONI NELLA VECCHIA SAVANNAH

Ghost tourism, a form of dark tourism, is steadily competing with traditional tourism in America’s historic places, including plantation sites and urban centers in the South that have been profoundly shaped by histories of slavery. This essay explores ways in which the fraught relationship between an enslaved woman and her male owner is foregrounded and trivialized in a popular ghost tour in Savannah, Georgia, “America’s Most Haunted City.” Through a close examination of the Sorrel-Weed House narrative, this piece analyzes how touristic interpretations such as this misrepresent racial and gender dynamics of the 19th century and today.

Panicieri, Silvia



BRODSKY'S "AN IMMODEST PROPOSAL:" CONTENTS AND OUTCOMES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY

This year falling the twentieth anniversary of the death of the Russian-born poet and essayist Joseph Brodsky, exile in the United States since 1972, it is worth to remind his project to foster literature – and poetry in particular - in his host country. On 10 May 1991, he was appointed “fifth Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress”. This second important achievement came after the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1987, and proved a final turning point for his work, since, from that moment on, he published almost exclusively in English. Presented during the inaugural evening at the Library of Congress, Brodsky's “An Immodest Proposal” took its title from Swift's provocative essay “A Modest Proposal” and consisted of providing free volumes of poetry in public places – airports, hotels, supermarkets, hospitals - where people congregate and “can kill time as time kills them.” Besides analyzing the contents of the project, the paper aims at investigating its outcomes. Brodsky's words are interesting not only for they give us the opportunity to understand his vision of American culture, but also because they are a further evidence of the deep bond he had with his adoptive country. Brodsky's warning offers us thoughts for reflection on the risks a society runs when a sufficiently higher culture is not spread between the masses. Brodsky's fears prove actual, unavoidably leading us to the tragic news reports of mass murdering by armed citizens in the USA: “What concerns me is that, unable to articulate, to express himself adequately, man reverts to action. Since the vocabulary of action is limited, as it were, to its body, he is bound to act violently, extending his vocabulary with a weapon where there should have been an adjective.”

Porro, Simona

“THOUGH WE MUST SUFFER, WE MUST NOT REBEL:” THE CALVINIST FRAMEWORK OF SUSAN WARNER'S *THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD*

According to Barbara Welter, religion or piety was at the heart of a “true” woman's cardinal attributes. This “peculiar susceptibility” to religion, reportedly bestowed upon women by God Himself, blessed them with an intrinsic virtuosity and, in so doing, appointed them as the bastions of morality within the domestic realm. This emphasis on religion stemmed from the revivalist movement that spread throughout the United States in the antebellum decades. The movement, known as the Second Great Awakening, was particularly successful at converting women, and at involving them in pastoral activities, including preaching. In this way, it laid the groundwork for the creation of a culture of female piety that unlocked the production of a literature infused with theology. In that respect, one of the most popular writers of the era was Susan Warner, the author of *The Wide, Wide World*. The novel, published in 1850, stands out in the genre for the magnitude



and scope of the religious aspect and, above all, for the doctrines espoused by the writer. Warner depicts the circumstances surrounding the protagonist's ordeal through orphanhood and subsequent adoption exclusively through the lens of a stern Calvinist approach – a notable exception in the genre, which was characterized mainly by Unitarian writers, who employed fiction to undermine Calvinism and to promote their doctrines of choice. The immense popularity of Warner's novel offers ample evidence that Puritan influence persisted in the country with undiminished strength.

Rossi, Alberto

MEMORY, TRUTH AND *DIFFÉRANCE* IN JULIAN BARNE'S *THE SENSE OF AN ENDING*

Julian Barnes' successful novel *The Sense of an Ending* has been generating diverse interpretations, as it is told by a completely unreliable narrator. As it is said in the first part of this article, though, the tendency of the critics so far has been that of trusting the narrator himself in the last confession he makes at the end of his recounting. On the contrary, in the second part of the present essay the author tries to give meaning to the reported story, not through what the narrator says, but through a few proofs scattered all over the novel which demonstrate that even the finale is in essence a lie or, at least, only a partial truth. This is probably because the narrator is being untruthful to himself as well, in order not to feel guilty for a misdeed he committed during his youth. In the last two parts, through references to several French thinkers, the author of the article demonstrates that the bone of contention, that is, what in the end the reader finds out to be the narrator's son, is a form of (in Derrida's terminology) *différance*, in other words an incomplete identity created by means of the narrator's identification.

Usai, Giulia

CAPELLI E IDENTITÀ. L'EVOLUZIONE DELLE PETTINATURE TRA I MEMBRI DELLA DIASPORA AFRICANA

This paper explores the cultural (and psychological) attitudes toward black people's hair and hairstyles and their significance in the formation of race relations. Starting from analysing the social, political and religious meanings associated to hair in pre-colonial Africa, the text individuates the Atlantic Trade as the event at the origin of a revolution in black aesthetics. In fact, before the massive influence of European standards, determinant in changing African men and women's approach to beauty and appearance, hairstyles in Sub-Saharan Africa used to represent a person's marital status, the hierarchical position in a community, the devotion to a particular cult. The Slavery Era, depriving individuals of their cultures' peculiar elements, caused the loss of many hair's social and spiritual symbols, although inaugurating new approaches and symbolisms in



hairstyles and black beauty culture. From mere imitation of masters' haircut and wigs, to afros, dreadlocks and cornrows, African-American and African-Caribbean communities' hairstyles reflect political choices, social condition and self-perception in accordance to the historical period. Observing the evolution of hairstyles through the decades, the essay covers a temporal journey until the current times, finding in hair an instrument to understand the impact of Western paradigms on black identity.