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Foreword

Linda Collinge-Germain and Michelle Ryan-Sautour



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Foreword

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- 1 The sixty-second issue of the *Journal of the Short Story in English* attests to the broad range of approaches published in the *Journal*.
- 2 The two articles on stories of the nineteenth century confront the stories with the philosophical works of their near contemporaries, most especially those on Reason. In his article entitled “Night-Thoughts on Poe and Kant: The Critique of Reason,” John Dolis looks closely at Poe’s two stories “Ligeia” and “The Fall of the House of Usher,” tales whose background is one of “hallucination and insanity in general, as these narratives both stage the scene of Reason and dismantle it,” the narration even, in the end, reciting its fall. Dolis offers a “mosaic of meditative moments that reflect several ghostly points of convergence in Poe and Kant’s reasoning about Reason.” Brandon Chao Chi Yen’s essay “Art, Psychology and Morality: The Dionysiac and the Apollonian in Vernon Lee’s *Hauntings*” examines Lee’s theoretical formulations on art and the supernatural, Lee’s dissolution of artistic definiteness and rational stability in her collection of ghost stories entitled *Hauntings*, and finally, the moral issues involved in this double disintegration.
- 3 The anticipation of the turn of the century brings with it the concept of the “New Woman,” dealt with by Cheryl Wilson in her study of Ella Hepworth Dixon’s collection *One Doubtful Hour and Other Side-Lights on the Feminine Temperament*, published in 1904. “In the short stories comprising the collection, Dixon uses her art to address such issues of feminine identity, depicting the everyday struggles facing women at the end of the century and engaging topics such as employment and money, courtship and marriage, and the challenges of living in an increasingly global world,” says Wilson.
- 4 In her article on the rarely studied stories of the Glass family by J.D. Salinger, Julie Ooms draws attention to the telling of war stories, and more precisely how, through one character, Walt Glass, “Salinger’s work rejects war stories that are preoccupied with heroic soldiery and valiant death and even accuses such stories of perpetuating war.” She argues that Walt Glass is not glorified as a soldier but rather as a “beloved brother, friend, and lover.”

- 5 In “Leaving the Bronx: Urban Spaces in Don DeLillo’s ‘Baghdad Towers West’ and His Early Short Stories,” Richard Dragan explores the uncollected fiction of the American novelist Don DeLillo and its depiction of realistic urban settings and characters. Dragan argues that “reconsidering these under-appreciated early short stories of DeLillo can deepen our understanding of his extensive output as a novelist; this writer has continually exhibited a tension between realism and postmodernism in portraying urban spaces within his fiction.”
- 6 In the two articles which follow, Tanya Tromble and Bénédicte Meillon look at stories by Joyce Carol Oates and Annie Proulx, respectively, from the angle of the fantastic, observing that both authors make use of the supernatural or the grotesque in their fiction. Tromble’s paper examines the fantastic apparitions in three of Oates’s short stories—“The Temple,” “Secret Reflections on the Goat-Girl,” and “Why Don’t You Come Live With Me It’s Time”—in a discussion of the way “the author’s self-styled ‘psychological realism’ is put to work in the context of her new gothic stories to elucidate her characters’ inner realities.” Looking at Annie Proulx’s three collections of Wyoming short stories, Bénédicte Meillon studies the fantastic and magical realistic aspects of those narratives, “which borrow from tall tales, local legends, folktales, fairy tales and myths, and waver between a postmodernist, sardonic kind of irony and a more pathetic, tragic depiction of the harsh and grim reality of rural Wyoming.”
- 7 The last two articles deal with twenty-first century modes of writing. In her article entitled “The Silence between Words: Events of Becoming through Trauma in A.L. Kennedy’s ‘What Becomes,’” Laurie Ringer observes that Kennedy’s story “reverberates with trauma and embodies pathological silences in a narrative with little dialogue.” She suggests that in spite of this, “a close reading with Deleuzian and Affect theories reveals emergent futurity for Frank, the protagonist. Beyond the congenital silences and pathological positionings of the linguistic turn lies the ongoing promise of the Deleuzian-fueled affective turn. There are becomings alongside lived and living traumas.”
- 8 Charles Holdefer’s article “How Short is Short?” explores “the trend of increased brevity and how the ‘short-short’ might be recoded as something different from a short story.” It also addresses the affinity of microfiction with prose poetry, as well as considering how changes in technology, notably reading from computer screens and hand-held devices, have affected perceptions of the future of short fiction.

AUTHORS

LINDA COLLINGE-GERMAIN

JSSE Editor

MICHELLE RYAN-SAUTOUR

JSSE Associate Editor