

Introduction

This issue of **Ilha do Desterro** is an outgrowth of a seminar entitled "The Open Road: Three Centuries of American Literature and Culture", held at UFSC from July 14 to July 18, 1986. The seminar was produced by UFSC's pós-graduação program in Línguas e Literaturas Estrangeiras, it was chaired by Sérgio Bellei and was supported in all its stages of planning by the Fulbright Commission and its Executive Secretary Marco Antônio da Rocha, by USIS, represented by John Matel in Porto Alegre, by Alvin Cohen in Brasília and especially through the vivacious advocacy of Maureen Taylor, whose death we have lamented in these pages.

Our intention in the seminar was to spread as large a net as possible around this vast beast American Culture and to that end we invited distinguished professors Townsend Ludington from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and Michael Zuckerman of the University of Pennsylvania. They are represented in these pages by Prof. Ludington's essay on John Dos Passos and his relationships to Portuguese-speaking culture and to Brazil and by Prof. Zuckerman's essay on American history-writing about the Founding Fathers.

We also invited the Fulbright Professors then present in Brazil — Cruce Stark of UFSC who declaimed a paper on the function

of landscape in **The Great Gatsby** and **The Scarlet Letter** and Terry Caesar of UFRJ who spoke on the genre of travel writing in the developing years of the travel industry. John McElroy, also a Fulbright Professor at UFSC, delivered a paper at the seminar but is not represented here.

Brazilian faculty came from all over Brazil: Paulo Gick and Rita Schmidt came from Porto Alegre and spoke about Benjamin Franklin and William Faulkner; Leticia Cavalcanti came from João Pessoa and spoke on Saul Bellow.

The UFSC faculty who hosted the seminar are represented here by essays from Sérgio Bellei, the Seminar director, on strategies of reading based on an examination of Alceu Amoroso Lima and Henfil, the cartoonist, by Bernadete Pasold, who compares **The Grapes of Wrath** and **Canaã**, by Susana Funck, who examines **The Fixer**, **The Centaur** and **Henderson** **The Rain King**, and finally by Arnold Gordenstein, the editor of this special issue who spoke on a reading of Eugene O'Neill.

Present at the seminar were about seventy participants from all over Brazil. Discussions were lively if polite. One culminated in a broken chair — the critic's effort to illustrate the use of a deconstructionist technique. Some effort was made to connect American and Brazilian cultures; as often happens, the Americans were more critical of America and more supportive of Brazil than the Brazilians — and the Brazilians were the reverse.

The present issue ends with a bibliography of basic background books for the study of American culture. More narrow or more deep bibliographic suggestions can be found in **The Literary History of the United States** or (for the nineteenth century) Norton's **Eight Great Writers**.

Arnold Gordenstein
UFSC

The editors of ILHA DO DESTERRO wish to express an especial thanks to Susana B. Funck without whose hawk-eyed editorial skills this issue would not be nearly as perfect.