> The Jameses we discover in his place are anxious, conflicted, marginal, sometimes ashamed of themselves, utterly at odds, it would seem with the royal 'we' that James assumed in his last deathbed dictations, slipping in and out of Napoleonic delusions. The new Henry Jameses are instead full of life and interest, not only in their times, but for our own, which as we begin to understand it continues to wind its way back to its early modern origins as it unfurls into our new century. (xii)

Miroslawa Buchholtz could not have possibly paid a greater tribute to her subject than by refusing to imprison Henry James in any of the existing versions of the Master. Her study is, indeed, populated by numerous Henry Jameses, however, none of them is claimed to be definitive or conclusive. By leaving a space for creative imagination and inviting herself as well as her readers to the act of individual re-creation of Henry James, she triumphantly transforms her book and elevates it from a purely academic study into a true work of auto/biography—the art of negotiation.

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Gordon M. Poole, ed., *A Hundred Years After: New Light on Francis Marion Crawford*. Sorrento: Franco Di Mauro Editore, 2011. 286 pages.

Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909) was one of the most popular as much as prolific American writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Born and raised in Italy—a son of the American sculptor Thomas Crawford—and educated in England and the United States, he was an epitome of social prominence and a true cosmopolitan. In 1886 he decided to settle down in Italy and took residence at a beautiful villa called Sant' Agnello in the town of Sorrento near Naples. By that time, he had already written six novels; their success encouraged Crawford to stay in the literary profession. His life away from the U.S. did not weaken his ties with the country and its people, as Crawford often traveled to Boston, New York and other American cities to promote his new books. The occasions for such literary trips were, indeed, numerous because for Crawford pro-

ducing two volumes of prose a year was something of a professional routine. However, prolific writers are often looked at with suspicion, and critics tend to believe that, in literary writing, the quantity can easily spoil the quality. In any case, the very voluminousness of Crawford's output can be one of the reasons why the writer's work sank into a relative oblivion after his death. Even though his prose is quite varied in terms of themes and genres, nowadays Crawford is chiefly remembered for his horror stories, a handful of which regularly appears in anthologies of this genre. Hopefully, this state of things will change in the near future, as the ongoing debate over the shape of the American literary canon and the growing significance of Transatlantic contexts in the field of American studies stimulate interest in authors like Crawford. A centennial volume entitled *A Hundred Years After: New Light of Francis Marion Crawford*, edited by Gordon M. Poole, possibly anticipates a forthcoming reappraisal of the writer. This collection of nine essays devoted to Crawford's life and work as well as to the artistic achievements of other members of his family was published under the auspices of the F. Marion Crawford Center for Research and Study in Sorrento.

The first part of the volume includes four essays on Crawford's literary art and begins, very suitably, with Richard Ambrosini's discussion of the writer's exclusion from the Anglo-American literary canon. In the critic's view, the main factor behind it is the predominance of modernist criticism in the first half of the twentieth century. Namely, modernist critics treated the works of pre-modernist and modernist authors like Henry James, Joseph Conrad and Virginia Woolf as models indicating how to assess literary value. Crawford himself said that his novels served a completely different purpose than James's "ethical studies," as he appreciatively called them. He believed that the value of fiction depended, in a big degree, on its marketable qualities and that romantic sensationalism was an asset rather than a drawback. In fact, in his 1893 critical essay *The Novel: What It Is*, Crawford described himself as a "novelist who belongs to the romantic persuasion" (31). Ambrosini points out that Crawford was not the only late-nineteenth-century writer to take such a view of fiction and, for example, he agreed on crucial literary issues with Robert Louis Stevenson. Therefore, the critic postulates that a possible strategy for recovering Crawford's work for the Anglo-American canon can consist in placing it more firmly in the context of the contemporary literary production which was much more varied than modernist critics were later willing to admit. Ludovico Isoldo extends the presentation of Crawford's ideas of literary writing by contrasting them with William Dean Howells's views as formulated in his most important and influential critical essays: *Criticism and Fiction* and *Novel-Writing and Novel Reading*. The critic claims that the essential difference between the former's "romantic" model of the novel and the latter's "realistic" model is more political than esthetic. Craw-

ford accused Howells of using fiction as a vehicle for promoting his own ideological position; in general, he believed that a manipulative use of the novel as an ideological tool was a serious threat to the status of the genre. Howells completely disagreed with Crawford's accusations; however, even if the Italian-born writer's assessment of the American literary authority was exaggerated, he deserves credit for his defense of literature's autonomy. The remaining two articles in the first part of the collection deal with much more specific subjects: Patricia S. Hageman explores Crawford's unpublished play *Evelyn Hastings*, arguing for the author's reappraisal as a playwright; whereas Taeko Kitahara analyzes the patterns of narrative construction in Crawford's stories of the supernatural.

The authors of the essays in the second part of the volume take up different aspects of Crawford's biography; interestingly enough, two essays out of three touch upon the writer's relations with women. Thus, Alessandra Contenti examines Crawford's correspondence with Vittoria Colonna, a young woman from the Italian noble class, and describes the nature of their friendship. She sees their letters, above all, as a "chronicle of infatuation" (88). In turn, Jane H. Pease presents a brief record of Crawford's acquaintance with several women and ponders how his preference for female rather than male company may have influenced his writing. According to the critic, Crawford, who believed that novels transmuted the author's experience into fiction, wanted to endow his female characters with the qualities of the women he knew, but he faced a major problem of how this was to be accomplished within the frames of the literary formulas on which he relied. Pease traces an evolution of Crawford's treatment of female characters that reflects his perception of the women from his circle: his earlier novels focus on male protagonists, his later works gradually introduce ambivalent secondary female characters, and finally, some of his last books directly address such subjects as marriage and divorce and construct a presumed female perspective. The third paper, by John Charles Moran, presents the history of Crawford's correspondence with Father Daniel E. Hudson, an editor of a minor Catholic journal in Indiana. What began as an occasional exchange of letters entailed a continuing correspondence and a growing mutual appreciation to the point that after Crawford's death Hudson was the one to receive a letter from the widow with her account of the writer's last moments. The third part of the volume contains two essays about the artistic achievements of Crawford's close relatives: Richard Dalby looks at the forgotten writings by Mrs. Hugh Fraser, or Mary Crawford—Francis Marin's sister—and Daniela Daniele offers a reappraisal of Thomas Crawford sculpture work.

A Hundred Years After presents an interesting, but still relatively unknown, chapter in the history of Transatlantic literary and, more broadly, cultural relations. What is of spe-