

## Abstracts

- 975 **Richard Menke**, *Telegraphic Realism: Henry James's *In the Cage**  
 In setting his 1898 tale *In the Cage* in a telegraph office, Henry James was adapting and investigating a metaphor that earlier novelists had used for the workings of fiction. As invoked by writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens, the idealized image of the electric telegraph hints at some of the formal and ideological properties of Victorian realism. With *In the Cage* James proves to be more alert than such predecessors not only to the social and technological mechanics of telegraphy but also to the significance of mediation—in telegraphy as well as in realist fiction. Analyzing the conjunction this essay calls “telegraphic realism” indicates the ways in which a medium’s imaginative possibilities may change over time and suggests the connections between the histories of media and of literature. (RM)
- 991 **Henry Staten**, *Is *Middlemarch* Ahistorical?*  
*Middlemarch* has been criticized as a work that subordinates politics and history to an ethics of universal sympathy. Such criticisms grant too much authority to narrative commentary over what is represented in the novel: the grip on the bourgeoisie of an ideology derived from the aristocracy as model class of Victorian society, resulting in a baffling of the movement of democracy. The disastrous consequences of the mystification of the sources of wealth by the allure of “aristocratization” are depicted in the figure of Lydgate; the possibilities of liberation from class ideology in the interests of democracy are evident in that of Ladislaw, who emerges as, in Raymond Williams’s words, the novel’s “thread to the future.” The contrast between these two figures shows the novel as a whole to be a critical analysis, not a symptom, of the historical impasse of Victorian society. (HS)