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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910449755003321 |
| Autore | Gibian Peter <1952-> |
| Titolo | Oliver Wendell Holmes and the culture of conversation // Peter Gibian [[electronic resource]] |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 2001 |
| ISBN | 1-107-11305-9 1-280-15310-5 0-511-11636-5 0-511-05342-8 0-511-15352-X 0-511-30348-3 0-511-48550-6 0-511-01763-4 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (xi, 398 pages) : digital, PDF file(s) |
| Collana | Cambridge studies in American literature and culture ; ; 127 |
| Disciplina | 818/.309 |
| Soggetti | Literature and society - United States - History - 19th century Conversation - History - 19th century Table-talk - History - 19th century Conversation in literature Dialogue in literature |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015). |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | Opening the Conversation -- The Conversation of a culture: strange powers of speech -- Holmes in the conversation of his culture -- "To change the order of conversation": interruption and vocal diversity in Holmes' American talk -- "Collisions of Discourse" I: The Electrodynamics of Conversation: A carnival of verbal fireworks -- "Collisions of Discourse" II: Electric and Ocaenic "Currents" In Conversation: The cultural work of Holmesian talk -- A Conversational Approach To Truth: the Doctor in dialogue with contemporary truth-sayers -- Conversation and "Therapeutic Nihilism": the Doctor in dialogue with contemporary medicine -- The Self In Conversation: the Doctor in dialogue with contemporary psychology -- The Two Poles Of |

Conversation -- The Bipolar Dynamics of Holmes' Household Dialogues: levity and gravity -- Holmes' House Divided: house-keeping and house-breaking -- "Cutting off the Communication": fixations and falls for the walled-in-self- Holmes in dialogue with Sterne, Dickens, and Melville -- Breaking the House of Romance: Holmes in dialogue with Hawthorne -- Closing the Conversation -- Conclusion: Holmes Senior in dialogue with Holmes Junior.

Sommario/riassunto

Peter Gibian explores the key role played by Oliver Wendell Holmes in what was known as America's 'Age of Conversation'. He was both a model and an analyst of the dynamic conversational form, which became central to many areas of mid-nineteenth-century life. Holmes' multivoiced writings can serve as a key to open up the closed interiors of Victorian America, whether in saloons or salons, parlours or clubs, hotels or boarding-houses, schoolrooms or doctors' offices. Combining social, intellectual, medical, legal and literary history with close textual analysis, and setting Holmes in dialogue with Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Fuller, Alcott and finally with his son, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Junior, Gibian radically redefines the context for our understanding of the major literary works of the American Renaissance.
