

From the Editors

For the sixth time, we offer our readers a wide-ranging collection of communiqués, commentaries, analyses and explorations dealing with the culture and society of 18th- and 19th-century Britain. Some themes and authors have long been well-known to this series, but we also have new names and new ideas in the 2018 publication.

The 18th century receives rather less attention in this volume but the contributions that we print are distinguished. There is discussion of adaptations of Roman plots in John Dennis's tragedies, a phenomenon which is placed within the framework of the general interest in the political and cultural life of Ancient Rome found in 18th-century English literature and criticism (Polyakov). We also have a detailed analysis of approaches to poverty in Scriblerian texts (Uściński) and an examination of socially transgressive behaviour through the literary career of an 18th-century Scottish pirate (Błaszak).

Moving on to the 19th century, analysis of William Wordsworth's religious and social beliefs is continued from earlier volumes, here concentrating on the poet's view of childhood (Borkowska). 19th-century religious beliefs are also the subject of an examination of John Henry Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua* and *The Dream of Gerontius* (Bystydzińska). Returning to the theme of anti-Catholicism raised earlier in the series, there is an investigation of the rise and fall of the bonfire night tradition of burning Guy Fawkes, concentrating on analysis of Harrison Ainsworth's popular 1841 novel *Guy Fawkes* and Selina Bunbury's 1844 *Coombe Abbey* (Mazurek).

Studies of the culture of the early 19th century also include a scrutiny of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* as a dialogue with the Country House ideal (Terentowicz-Fotyga). And we have a new departure in the use of disability theory to analyse Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, raising questions connected with the social structuring of disability in general (Negrón).

There are further explorations of the visual and material culture of the Victorian period, with investigation of Pre-Raphaelite dress in the context of artistic appreciation of changing gender roles (Antonowicz). In this broad area, the message of Irish 19th-century landscape painting is also analysed, in an attempt to link space with national and cultural identity, and discuss the artistic legacy of British-Irish relations while placing selected landscape artists within the colonial narrative of Ireland as the Other (Kociołek).

Moving from artefacts to theory, we have an article assessing and comparing J. R. R. Tolkien's *Tree and Leaf*, which employs these motifs to communicate reflections on various forms of creativity, and John Ruskin's *The Nature of Gothic*, suggesting that the wide dissemination of Ruskin's ideas had an impact on Tolkien (Kowalik).

Neo-Victorianism is well represented. There is an exploration of two 21st-century British television serial dramas centred on Queen Victoria, which examines the extent of neo-Victorian influence on these portrayals of the British monarchy (Babilas). We offer an interpretation of a purported 2012 autobiography of Jack the Ripper, discussing intertextuality and the paratextual elements that aim to authenticate the account (Krawczyk-Żywko). There is also discussion of a world which, although technologically advanced, is reminiscent of the Victorian period, in Stephen Hunt's 21st-century novel, *The Court of the Air* (Kozak). In this area, we also present a discussion of visual reimaginings in painting and illustrations, comic books, feature films, TV shows and video games, of Joseph Le Fanu's novella *Carmilla*, with its ground-breaking female vampire, concentrating on the 1971 film, *Daughters of Darkness* (Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska).

Continuing within the wide framework of the Gothic, we offer an analysis of narrative strategies and spatial organisation in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in an attempt to resolve the basic Jekyll/Hyde mystery of whether Hyde was a Doppelgänger or "the animal within me" (Kokot). Manuel Aguirre's theory of two zones in horror literature separated by thresholds – "the human world" and the "Otherworld" – is applied to the haunted house in one of Elizabeth Gaskell's rare excursions into the supernatural, "The Old Nurse's Story," where concern is voiced about the fate of female victims of men and the idea of home as a safe place is undermined by its presentation as anti-home (Kędra-Kardela).

There is discussion of late 19th-century invasion literature in the context of Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Ring of Thoth" and "Lot no. 249", the plots of both of which can be presented as another version of imperial narratives, with ultimate victory over the invading force by means of new, scientific methods (Jajszczok). The relationship between late Victorian scientists and speculative writers is further reviewed in the context of British popular and fictional approaches to scientific research, showing interactions with the work of British particle physicists, a summary of whose achievements is provided (Oramus).

Two novels with a mission or purpose are discussed and compared, concentrating on central themes of insanity in the case of Charles Reade's matter-of-fact romance *Hard Cash* (1863) and on vivisection in Wilkie Collins's *Heart and Science* (1883), concluding that neither departs far from the sensation framework (Nitka). Victorian anxieties of a different kind are the subject of

a discussion of Anthony Trollope's novel, *The Fixed Period*, which foregrounds the social problem of old age and how to treat elderly citizens (Dobosiewicz). On a related theme, we have a communiqué on the history of the Queen Margaret College Settlement in Glasgow, a part of the wider university settlement movement designed to encourage the moral and material betterment of slum dwellers (Kłosińska).

In the context of Victorian social problems, Dickens receives the usual well-deserved attention. An article on *A Christmas Carol* addresses the question of what happened to Scrooge from a psychological perspective, dealing with the perception of time and balancing time perspectives, in the context of Philip Zimbardo's Temporal Theory and Time Perspective Therapy (Kujawska-Lis). Another article seeks to examine Dickens's approach to the issues of race and British colonialism through analyses of the racialised body in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Pypeć). A third Dickens article deals with the representation of poverty in Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (Setecka).

Finally, at a time when Britain is set to "leave" Europe, the range of interest in comparative, international and trans-national questions attracts attention. Comparative literary studies are represented by consideration of plot similarities between Józef Ignacy Kraszewski's *Jermola* and George Eliot's *Silas Marner* with discussion of the possibility that George Eliot was acquainted with the plot of *Jermola* before the publication of her own novel (Budrewicz). In the area of music and drama, we have an analysis of the sources for 19th-century portrayals of the characters and behaviour of 16th-century British Queens in Gaetano Donizetti's operas, including detailed interrogation of the lyrics (Ożarowska). Moving away from literature to the society it represents, comparative trends are examined in Polish and Irish political co-operation and agendas in 1830s London, which again continues a debate on Polish political refugees undertaken in previous volumes (Harris).

We would like to thank all contributors and hope that readers will find much here to stimulate thought and further research.

Grażyna Bystydzieńska
Emma Harris