
Editorial

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This general issue of *Critical Survey* ranges from mediaeval to modern literature and drama.

Elizabeth Mazzola examines early modern printed popular ballads to find representations of women that differ significantly from the mainstream of Petrarchan poetry. In the latter, women are feared for their power to infect with the plague of love. Popular ballads, however, register the presence of women 'searchers', charged with entering houses to locate plague, their findings printed in the weekly *Bills of Mortality*, and deploy such women as examples of rehabilitation and redemption.

Macarena García-Avello re-examines Iris Murdoch's fiction in search of feminist aspirations scholars have generally failed to find, and aims to reassess her legacy as a writer by analysing from a feminist perspective one of her most acclaimed novels, *The Sea, The Sea* (1978). The tension between the androcentric approach of a self-deluded male narrator and a female author whose worldview is strongly influenced by her gender results in a feminist critique which is not based on the recovery of a female voice, but on the exploration of patriarchy within the novel and the production of a feminist epistemology derived from a dialogue between Murdoch's fiction and philosophy.

Alirezah Mahdipour, Hossein Pirnajmuddin and Pyeem Abbasi revisit Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* as a form of 'liturgy', defined as a communal means of social cohesion, but one which 'depicts the secularisation of liturgy and its appropriation for social control, and paradoxically, a *carnavalesque* celebration of the reversal of social hierarchy'.

Paul Rapley reads *Much Ado About Nothing* as a play which exposes the rottenness within an arbitrary system of government, but does not dare carry the plot to its logical conclusion. The responses to events by the dominant nobles, a prince and a count, are not merely foolish and damaging, but, in light of the guidance of, among others, Girolamo Muzio and Baldassare Castiglione, deeply dishonourable. Benefiting from a protected status they naturally wished to preserve, the playmakers create a historically credible set of characters, but do not make explicit any radical questioning of rank and degree.

Roohollah Datli Beigi, Pyeem Abbasi and Zahra Jannessari Ladani revisit Percy Shelley's 'Ozymandias' (1818), familiar as an expression of the poet's hatred of tyranny, and argue, using the concept of urban decay and mytho-



archetypal concepts, that the ruins of the poem anticipate the modern phenomenon of urban decay as the return of the repressed in city-forms. What the poem presents as destruction, death, ruins and decay is in fact a potentiality for regeneration. The poem thus becomes an uncanny Dionysian defiance against both the tyranny of his age and the rationalism of the Enlightenment period.

Niall Gildea discusses the notorious expression 'logical phallusies', imputed to Jacques Derrida by Barry Smith in 1992 in a letter arguing against the proposed award to Derrida of an honorary doctorate at Cambridge. Derrida insisted that this expression appeared nowhere in his oeuvre – it has never been found – and yet it has endured, in discussions of Derrida's work and general legacy, more than any other aspect of Derrida's 'Cambridge Affair'. Gildea contends that its misattribution to Derrida is a gesture which Derrida's work guards against and undermines – even deconstructs – in advance, and sounds a note of caution about the 'post-theoretical' practice of assimilating philosophers and theorists to the humanities via the decontextualised appropriation of putatively synecdochic buzzwords.