

Editorial



It is my pleasure and privilege to inaugurate the second issue of *Text Matters*, devoted to *Marginalia/Marginalities*. A special guest of the issue is Krzysztof Zanussi, an internationally acclaimed film director, whose visit to the University of Łódź in December 2011 created a unique opportunity for a conversation about his incredibly rich oeuvre.

Following this are three sections of *Text Matters* engaging with *Marginalia/Marginalities*. The first section, titled “Marginal Matters in Theatre and Film,” opens with two articles placed in different time contexts but concerned with theatre and drama. William Over examines actor biographies from the 18th century, and shows how actors gradually moved away from a disdained marginal status towards the position of public educators and “advocates of social improvement.” Jadwiga Uchman explores Samuel Beckett’s activity as a self-translator, namely, his rendering *En attendant Godot* into English with considerable differences in details, related, for example, to place names. The next two contributions focus on American films. Catherine M. Lord discusses *The Thin Red Line* by Terrence Malick so as to engage with images of nature as the margin for human activity, her analysis inspired by Jacques Derrida’s *Margins of Philosophy*. Katarzyna Małecka’s essay deals with the Coen brothers’ neo-noir comedy *The Big Lebowski*, whose failure as a cinema release was followed by huge DVD sales and internet viewing figures.

The next section, “Margins in Fiction, Poetry and Literary Theory,” opens with two articles dealing with the Gothic. Delving into its beginnings, Agnieszka Kliś grounds her analysis in the post-Freudian understanding of the Gothic as repressed and expelled to the margin. Maria Beville provides us with insights into “Le Horla” by Guy de Maupassant and *She* by H. Rider Haggard, exploring a significant relation of terror to the

fantastic, the understanding of the latter influenced by Tzvetan Todorov. Collapsing the boundaries between art and literature, Zbigniew Maszewski illuminates the oeuvre of Bruno Schulz, a Polish-speaking author of Jewish origin, whose ex-libris designed for Weingarten is shown to articulate the meanings informing Schulz's prose. Wit Pietrzak focusses on the poetry of J.H. Prynne, who draws inspiration from Ezra Pound, Charles Olson and Chinese literature. The next two articles intersect with postcolonialism. Tom Thomas examines Edward Said as a thinker who inhabited an in-between zone as a result of interests which made him incessantly cross and question the boundaries of disciplines. Paul Sharrad's text focusses on the reception of Thomas Keneally's novels in his home country Australia and in Poland. Finally, Sylwia Wojciechowska explores the significance of the bogus quotation for the message of Jim Crace's novel *Arcadia*.

7

The articles collected in the section "Marginalized Identities" all hinge on protagonists who are at odds with a cultural, social or family context, and who are therefore consigned to that which is repressed but can (or cannot) be transcended. The section opens with the first part of a biographical study of Ira Daniel Aldridge, the natural son of a famous black nineteenth-century actor who died in Łódź. It was submitted by Bernth Lindfors, author of a biography of Ira Aldridge himself. The next contribution, by Kylo-Patrick R. Hart, delves into gay masculinities constructed in "Brokeback Mountain," a short story by Annie Proulx. Remaining within American fiction, Anna Gilarek juxtaposes two dystopian novels—*The Female Man* by Joanna Russ and *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy—so as to examine the marginalization of women. Jadwiga Maszewska analyzes ethnic literature, focussing on the motif of "inter-cultural travel," which pushes the frontiers of the American literary canon into a hitherto marginalized zone. The short stories she discusses include Alice Walker's "Everyday Use," Louise Erdrich's "The World's Greatest Fishermen," and Daniel Chacon's "The Biggest City in the World." In contrast, Richard J. Gray II looks at the postcolonial novel *La Goutte d'or* by Michel Tournier, whose Somali protagonist ventures to France on a quest for his image imprisoned in a tourist's camera, but who remains subject to marginalization enforced by an imperial gaze. Identity dilemmas are given a different turn by Alessandra Rizzo, whose study concerns Monica Ali and Jhumpa Lahiri (of Bangladeshi and Bengali roots respectively) and the impact of cultural translation on second-generation immigrants. In the last submission, Praveen Shetty, Vishnumoorthy Prabhu and Pratapchandra T provide insights into Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, whose protagonist experiences frustration with the global market and climbs the social ladder to finally become an agent of the very forces he disdained.

Three reviews in this issue tackle entirely different topics. Adam Sumera comments on the way images of London in literature are conjured up and explored in *The Making of London: London in Contemporary Literature* by Sebastian Groes. Wit Pietrzak engages with Simon Glendinning's *Derivida* in order to demonstrate which aspects of the philosopher's oeuvre are given special treatment. Monika Kocot examines the way "Native Americanness" is constructed in *Native Authenticity: Transnational Perspectives on Native American Literary Studies*. Finally, but importantly, the message of *Marginalia/Marginalities* is completed by two interviews. In the first, Maria Assif talks to Fadia Faqir, a Jordanian writer based in Britain, about the marginalization of Arab women and a paradoxical freedom offered by in-betweenness and displacement. In the second, Krzysztof Majer talks to Norman Ravvin, a Canadian writer of Jewish origin, about the tradition of Jewish writing, and his "atypical" point of view embraced in stories related to a Polish Jewish past.

While the contributors discuss subjects ranging from literature through literary theory to film and theatre, their message revolves around discursive marginalia or marginalized identities. The texts are often informed by a Derridean reading of the relation between the centre and the margin, whereby the margin becomes a site of disruptive creativity displacing the centre and shading off into a non-hierarchical succession of marginalia which question and redefine the meaning of texts and the construction of identities.

Dorota Filipczak