

explorations



Explorations: A Journal of Language and Literature

A note from the editors

This issue of *Explorations* focuses on literature and brings together six essays whose topics range from political/social activism to questions of how philosophical ideas and theoretical frameworks relate to literary texts, and whose convention varies from detailed readings to the exposition of such diverse intellectual complexes of ideas as (for example) modernism, existentialism, Bergsonism or feminism.

We have two papers dealing with the figures of relatively unknown social activists. In what many readers may find a pretty surprising paper, Joseph J. Hughes unearths for us the work of Aleksander Majkowski, a forgotten Kashubian writer whose 1938 novel 'Life and Adventures of Remus' was translated into English in 2008. Then, Agnieszka Kaczmarek takes a look at Edward Abbey, an American essayist and novelist coping with environmental issues, and takes account of his preoccupations with the complex figure of the wilderness. Both Majkowski and Abbey are absorbing and thought-provoking authors and they definitely deserve more attention.

A somewhat similar kind of socially committed criticism is also present in Anna Gilarek's essay about the uses of the utopian/dystopian convention in the feminist speculative fiction (mainly novels) of the 1970s and the 1980s. As the Polish scholar notes, the formal devices employed by the woman novelists enable them to pose the gender-related issues in a new and interesting light.

There are two texts with the Modernist agenda. James Hussey gives us a nuanced reading of William Faulkner's 'As I Lay Dying' in the context of Henri Bergson's philosophical ideas of time and duration (mediated by T. S. Eliot's early poetry), while Ewa Brzeska and Aneta Wadowska examine the existentialist anxieties of the contemporary man as presented in the selected works of Samuel Beckett and Albert Camus.

Finally, there is Wit Pietrzak's engaged interpretation of Ted Hughes's 1977 volume *Gaudete*. As the author convincingly argues, the later poetry of the Yorkshire wordsmith is a fascinating record of the poet's search for his poetic voice and his living up to the 'task of healing the gaping wound between man and the world that he inhabits' (as it is put at the beginning of the essay).

As you will no doubt notice, the novelty of the third issue is the interview section. We hope to carry on with it and to invite some celebrated authors and scholars to share their ideas with us. Mark Ford is a well-known British poet and literary critic, and we are happy and honoured to have him around. He has a lot of interesting things to say about

his poetic career and is refreshingly candid on the subject of literary influences, fascinations and processes. That's a great read, not to be missed.

As usual, we have a few reviews appearing at the end of the issue. And as usual, we will be glad to hear from you and have your comments. Please feel free to contact us at [explorations\(at\)uni.opole.pl](mailto:explorations(at)uni.opole.pl) on the papers as well as share your thoughts or ask the author a question.