

Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of *VIDES*, the online journal produced by the students of the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, as part of their Master's degree in Literature and Arts. As the name of the degree suggests, the course covers many different academic fields alongside literature: philosophy, history, material culture, history of art, theology and architecture. The journal features essays that combine these disciplines, enlightening understanding in one field through study of another. This edition brings together essays that explore connections between two artefacts, which for the purposes of this collection can include texts, objects, buildings and images. The authors integrate detailed research with new interpretations, addressing contemporary debates that spill over the confines of a particular period or specialism.

Martha Doerr Toppin looks at an early period of English expansionism, the claiming of 'Nova Albion' on the Californian coast by Francis Drake. Toppin's article compares an early written account with an Elizabethan world map, and examines how both artefacts reinforce England's claim to an 'undiscovered' region of North America. Geoffrey Stone begins his study in Italian antiquity, but concentrates his attention on early nineteenth-century depictions of a Grecian vase and an Etruscan tomb. His article considers how attitudes to the past can change over time, and how this can affect the perceived value of such artefacts.

British responses to other cultures are further examined in Joe Dunnage's article, looking at the practice of opium smoking. Comparing a nineteenth-century magazine article with a contemporary opium pipe, Dunnage discusses how such artefacts became symbolic not just of an oriental exoticism but of a perceived 'cultural contagion'. He contrasts this with an examination of the real extent of opium use in Victorian England. Siri Kohl's article considers two very contrasting British responses to the German composer Richard Wagner. Kohl demonstrates that in Aubrey Beardsley's *The Wagnerites*, the composer's work is portrayed as appealing to a feminine degenerate morality, whereas George Bernard Shaw sees in the Ring Cycle, and especially in the figure of Siegfried, a justification for his own Fabian socialist values. Peter Tuite's article addresses Matthew Arnold's perspective on the Irish political situation, and the role of culture as a redemptive, evolutionary force. By examining the 'Byzantium' poems of W. B. Yeats, Tuite identifies areas of comparison and disagreement between Yeats's and Arnold's approach to Irish culture.

Issues of British political culture are the subject of the next four articles. Paul Stephens offers a close examination of Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'Men of England &c – A song,' and interprets its issues of economic and social injustice in comparison with William Cobbett's 'Address to the Journeymen Labourers'. David Potter discusses two vivid portrayals of the pre-reformed electoral hustings, in the engravings of William Hogarth and the novels of Anthony Trollope. Despite originating in two different centuries Potter demonstrates a surprising level of commonality between the two. Darren Ormandy's article is also concerned with nineteenth-century politics, comparing Disraeli's novel about Chartism, *Sybil*, with the imagery on a Chartist membership card, arguing that both subjects look to interpretations of English history as justification for their political agenda. Ian Hunter's article looks at the question of historical justification from the opposite end of the political spectrum, examining how the Victorian monarchy employed neo-medievalist themes in art and sculpture to reinforce Victoria's royal authority, and to incorporate Prince Albert's German 'foreignness' into a reinvented British cultural heritage.

The next group of essays deals broadly with aspects of gender politics. Philippa Toogood looks at the portrayal of Josephine Butler, in an 1855 bust by pre-Raphaelite sculptor Alexander Munro, and the obituary of Butler which appeared in *The Times* in 1907. The lacunae left by each of these artefacts are as telling as the statements they deliberately make,

and Toogood's paper explores the legacy of this remarkable campaigner as seen through these very different lenses. Kenya Hunt uses an 1863 photograph by Lady Clementina Hawarden to illustrate Edward William Godwin's 'A Lecture on Dress.' An expression of the Victorian opposition between nostalgia and fast-paced change, the Aesthetic Dress movement deeply influenced today's fashion industry. It gave Victorian women the opportunity to escape the strictures of the corset, and express their individuality in new ways. Karen Walker's paper also involves the concept of nostalgia, this time using George Elgar Hicks's 1857 watercolour *The Sinews of Old England* as a starting point in an essay which connects discourses of gender and class within the image with those apparent in an advertisement for Cadbury's Cocoa from some thirty years later. By invoking an idealistic, idyllic rural past, both images make statements about desirable standards of behaviour for men and women in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Anna Attwell focuses on representations of Jane Morris created by her husband, William Morris. She finds correlations between Morris's early poem 'The Defence of Guenevere' and his only surviving oil painting, *La Belle Iseult*. These both portray Jane as a character in a mythical love triangle, which was echoed in the couple's own lives by Jane's long-standing affair with their mutual friend, artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Attwell shows here that Morris found artistic inspiration and ideological contradiction in the situation, and that he was all too aware of the dichotomies in both his public and private lives.

Several of the articles above also link with others which deal with a common theme of aesthetics. David Lamoureux finds a successor to John Ruskin in William Lethaby, whose Eagle Insurance building in Birmingham stands as a bridge between Ruskin's moral criticism of nineteenth-century society and William Morris's socio-economic critique. For Lamoureux, Lethaby's architecture is a statement which combines Ruskinian ideals with modern industry and science. Penelope Fraser stays with Morris, delving deeper into his famous ideologies about art, labour and home decoration, using as her example a terracotta garden pot made by the Compton Potters' Arts Guild. Founded by Mary Watts and funded largely by the artistic career of her husband, George Frederick Watts, the pottery invites an examination of the contradictions between ideology and commercialism, directly applied to the decorative arts of which Morris was such a champion. Moving towards the commercial activities of Morris himself, Elan Preston-Whyte explores decorative minstrel angels on a fourteenth-century crozier and a nineteenth-century stained-glass church window. Linking imagery created centuries apart, this article gives a fine example of the direct inspiration which the late-nineteenth century Arts and Crafts movement took from medieval art. Staying with the theme of applied religious art, two essays tackle the controversial issue of later additions to church interiors. Shanna M. Patton re-examines stylistic and historical parallels between Sir Christopher Wren's original, unexecuted design for the altar and reredos at St Paul's Cathedral with that installed by Thomas Garner in 1888. She finds much common ground between the two, contrary to previous scholarship. Christine Armstrong charts the physical alterations to a Cheshire church which reflected the changing attitudes to worship in the nineteenth century. The influence of the Oxford Movement can be seen in the shifting priorities of clergy and congregation, and the installation of a reredos obscuring part of the east window is an unassailable symbol of the influence of High Church ideals.

All of the essays in the final section compare a literary text with a visual artefact; an image or a building. Anna Trotter's work suggests a single new originator for both of her pieces: *The Continnence of Scipio* by an as yet unknown artist and the play 'Hannibal and Scipio', popularly ascribed to Thomas Nabbes. The essay explores the suggestion of similarity in the painting's possible presentation of Katherine Manners as Lucretia, as well as Manners' potential involvement in a printed edition of the play. Similarly, Richard Lamont analyses the interplay between William Kent's illustration of 'Spring' in James Thompson's *The Seasons*, the grotto in Marlborough, Wiltshire designed by Lady Hertford and the possibility of Lady Hertford herself as muse of both poets and artist. Laura Bouttell's analysis steps away from

muses to the goddess of love, in her examination of two interpretations of the story of 'Venus and Adonis' from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Bouttell argues that William Shakespeare's narrative poem, 'Venus and Adonis', and J. M. W. Turner's painting *Adonis Departing for the Chase*, both adopt a similar narrative focus which rejects that suggested by Ovid's text.

Two of the other essays in this group consider the impact of specific buildings and an associated text. Virginia Brookes notes the link of John Wesley between the Methodist church in New Inn Hall Street, Oxford and the novel *Adam Bede* by George Eliot. Brookes explores the 'bold face' of Methodism depicted through the building of bigger churches to house the escalating congregations and the open air preaching of Dinah Morris, a character in the novel. Where this essay engages with realism in its presentation of Methodism, Jeremy Newton's article veers in the opposite social direction. Newton's study of the Banqueting House in Whitehall, designed by Inigo Jones, and Ben Jonson's 'Masque of Augurs', demonstrates the metatheatrical nature of a play which was specifically designed for this newly built space. Elaine Hernen's paper departs from the idea of a building as artefact, analysing instead the importance of the visiting card in light of Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*. Hernen shows how high society at this time was preoccupied with categorisation, with the visiting card acting as a fragment of the person it represented.

These comparative studies of artefacts demonstrate how interdisciplinary analysis between often quite discrete fields of academic research is able to highlight connections and develop greater understanding, shedding light on aspects of both that have hitherto remained obscured. Many of the subjects investigated will be examined in greater depth, as part of the Master's dissertations which will conclude the degree in Literature and Arts, and in some cases will continue into areas of doctoral research.