

Editorial

The Dovetail editorial team are delighted to welcome you to our first-ever issue. The journal was established one year ago by postgraduates of the School of English and Creative Writing in Bangor University with the help of some enthusiastic members of staff. Our aim was to provide an online, peer-reviewed forum specifically for *postgraduates* of literature and creative studies to be able to publish their work. As the journal's title suggests, *The Dovetail* conjoins critical and creative writing unifying the two overlapping interests.

Our first issue focuses on the interdisciplinary theme of 'Science and Literature', encouraging cross fertilization of the two areas. This inaugural issue is made up of critical or creative content from five contributors; Zoe Balaitis, Ann Loveridge, Daniel Shelley-Smith, Georgie Lorimer, and Mike Rose-Steel.

The opening article by Zoe Bulaitis demonstrates the contemporary relevance of placing these two disciplines 'in conversation' with each other. Bulaitis re-examines the famous 'two cultures' debate over the interrelation between English Literature and Science between C.P Snow and F.R Leavis in the 1960s in light of the recent changes to Higher Education in England under the free market and privatization. Rather than repeating the easily identifiable differences between Snow and Leavis's arguments, Bulaitis reads this interdisciplinary 'controversy' as 'conversation' and argues that such interchanges are necessary in order to address the blind-spots of the current marketization of Higher Education Institutions.

Although at a comparative distance in time, Ann Loveridge's focus on the late-Victorian vivisection controversy in the second article of this issue similarly emphasizes the importance of scientific and literary exchanges. Loveridge analyses the published lecture notes of two medical students, Louisa Lind af Hageby and Leisa Schartau as *The Shambles of*

Science (1913) and its relationship to Leonard Graham's novella *The Professor's Wife* (1881), in order to explore the literary strategies adopted by anti-vivisectionists. She argues that by drawing on the generic conventions of sensationalist fiction, anti-vivisectionists were able to amplify their voice while educating a lay-readership on the ethical dubiousness of this late Victorian medical practice. Rather than perceiving this interchange in wholly positive terms, Loveridge underscores how the complex intersections between medicine and literature could both benefit and detract from each other.

Moving away from controversy and debate, conceptual poet Daniel Shelley-Smith introduces the reciprocity of physics and poetry as central to his creative approach, which he refers to as 'graphemechanical writing'. Whereas so-called 'science poetry' has a tendency to appropriate scientific concepts and terminology as metaphor, creating poetry 'at the expense of science', Shelley-Smith argues that his work places science and poetry on equal footing by approaching physics through the medium of poetry. Combining a Derridean interpretation of poetry with aspects of Einstein's theories of relativity, Shelley-Smith's two poems, 'E=MC²' and 'Freefall: The Happiest Thought', demonstrate that by constructing poems as writing rather than as speech, the space of the page or screen can act 'as a dynamic element of poetics'.

Contrary to Shelley-Smith's emphasis on poetry as writing, Georgie Lorimer feels that the historical progression of poetry away from a purely oral art form towards an increasingly silent, written medium has entailed a loss or de-emphasis on poetic euphony and the musicality of language. Looking backwards to the mediaeval lyrical tradition, Lorimer's two poems, 'The Fernery' and 'Uktion' aim to create a more 'musically-aware poetry'. The subjects of the two poems are similarly historical in focus: 'The Fernery' is a requiem for Tatton Park in Cheshire during the Elizabethan era, while 'Uktion' is a fantasia on the fourteenth-century, Benedictine monastery of Stata Florida in Wales. Providing a welcome

contrast to the commonplace association of science with modern progress, each of these poems incorporates the contemporary scientific thoughts of its day as a way of bringing these historical periods back to life for the reader. In this way, Lorimer blurs modern dichotomies between science and religion, medicine and superstition.

A similar focus informs Mike Rose-Steel's fictional 'article', 'The Mysterious and the Marginal: The Incubation of Poetry Within and About the Occult Writings of Sir John Grantner'. Steel's pseudo-article discusses an imaginary sonnet, 'recently discovered' as marginalia in the Felbrigg Library copy of Sir John Grantner's *On Reason: 63 Paths to Logickal Obedience* (1558). Through the deployment of quasi-scholarly language and a comprehensive bibliography to imaginary critical works, Steel convincingly informs readers of the history of the non-existent manuscript, as well as its fictional author's mystic theosophy. In this way, Steel poses philosophical questions over 'empty names', in the Russellian sense of proper names devoid of a referent, providing a counterpoint to the call for truthfulness and psychological realism as literary values in the work of Greg Currie. By tricking the reader into treating the 'article' as fact, Steel's prose draws attention to our almost religious belief in the scientificity of critical rhetoric and scholarly apparatus, probing the limits between fact and fiction, reason and superstition in the same way as the fictional author Grantner does in his alchemical theosophy.

Each of these contributions challenges the fixity of disciplinary boundaries, both between critical and creative writing, and between the literary and the scientific. As such, they not only serve to broaden our aesthetic appreciation, but also raise important economic, philosophical, and ethical and questions over our approaches to these disciplines.

-Rebecca Butler, General Editor