

MITSUOHARU MATSUOKA (editor), *Dickens and the Anatomy of Evil: Sesquicentennial Essays*, Athena Press, 2020, pp. xiv+ 366. ISBN 978-4-86340-337-6. 3,636 JPY (c. £24). Copies available from Grayswood Press at the reduced price of £20. Contact: grayswood.press@tiscali.co.uk

In the summer 2017 issue of *The Dickensian*, Michael Hollington referred to T. S. Eliot's 1932 Clark lecture in which Dickens is mentioned as one of the authors exemplifying 'the doubt or disbelief in Good and Evil'. With twenty essays focusing all Dickens's major fiction and travelogues through the prism of evil, *Dickens and the Anatomy of Evil* is yet another piece of evidence to cast doubt on that statement. Written to commemorate the 2020 sesquicentennial of the Inimitable's death, the publication begins with Paul Schlicke's informative catalogue of Dickensian villains and a selection of the novelist's quotations of particular relevance to all who may want to investigate the subject. Adopting diverse critical standpoints and methodologies, the essays take the reader on a chronological journey through Dickens's fiction, exploring various approaches to the theme of wickedness, iniquity, corruption, baseness, malignity, and villainy: evil in Dickens assumes multiple guises and faces.

For lack of space, I am unable to provide detailed treatment of each essay, but I would like to mention at least a few. Examining *The Pickwick Papers* (1836) through the concept of affect, Mark Weeks pays particular attention to 'nomadic comic violence', functioning in the novel as 'a countervailing force' to 'the relatively inert paper-bound, code-bound violence inflicted by the law' (pp. 34 & 37). Mizuki Tsutsui studies Ralph Nickleby as an anti-melodramatic villain with his conflicted conscience over the treatment of Kate Nickleby, and the role of interpolated tales ('The Baron of Grogzwig' and the Crummles episode related to Nicholas's translation of a French melodrama) as ironic parodies of the theme of self-reformation and conversion. Nanako Konoshima focuses on the portrayal of landscape as a metaphor of current social evils and the motif of confinement in *American Notes* (1842), investigating the possible link between the flat, monotonous, carceral American Prairie and the marshes in *Great Expectations*. Tomoya Watanabe dissects the troubled relationship between Jonas and Anthony Chuzzlewit in the context of Dickens's strained relations with his own father in the early 1840s. Quoting Sam Weller, the novelist confesses in one of his 1843 letters (To Thomas Mitton, 20 February) that John Dickens 'has gone ravin' mad with conscious willany' (p. 143). Mitsuoharu Matsuoka examines *Bleak House* (1852-1853) in relation to the advent of the Uniform Penny Post in 1840 and the novelist's own displeasure at being flooded by innumerable importuning epistles, in order to illustrate the evils of letter-writing depicted in the novel. Apart from Mrs Jellyby's obsessive correspondence and the incessant begging letters that besiege John Jarndyce, there is the case of Mademoiselle Hortense's hoax letters written to incriminate Lady Dedlock, and Mr Tulkinghorn's impending death is metaphorically 'written' in the allegorical ceiling fresco in his chambers. Keiko Kiriya analyses James Harthouse from *Hard Times* (1854) as an insidious 'dandy-devil', and considers connections with Aubrey Beardsley's selected illustrations of dandies to Walter

Jerrold's *Bon-Mots* (1983, 1984). Likened to 'Lucifer', to a 'powerful Familiar' and to 'the very Devil', Harthouse is preying upon Tom Gradgrind and his sister, and equally suffering from the evils of boredom and idleness (p. 248). Arisa Nakagoe explores Dickens's depiction of two foreigners from *Little Dorrit* (1855-1857)—'a cosmopolitan gentleman', Rigaud and an Italian expatriate, Cavaletto; and the two Swiss from *No Thoroughfare* (1867) —Obenreizer and Marguerite (p. 264). Blurring the boundaries between the foreign other and domestic self, cosmopolitanism and multilingualism can be perceived as threatening and dangerous, Nakagoe argues, particularly when the malevolent other is hard to identify, blending in with the surroundings. Putting *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) under critical scrutiny, Masayo Hasegawa investigates Dickens's explicit and implicit references to cannibalism in the depiction of the Parisian mob, in 'life-thirsting, cannibal-looking, bloody minded' Jacques Three of Saint Antoine, in Madame Defarge's 'feasting' glare at Darney and even in Sydney Carton's self-sacrificial death (p. 281). Reading *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) through the motif of misplacement, Yasuhiko Matsumoto considers how the lives of several characters are thwarted and entrapped by misplaced hopes and desires, recalling for instance the image of Mr Grewgious talking to his reflection in a looking glass (p. 351).

An important asset of the volume is undoubtedly the rich and illuminating illustrative material from sundry editions of Dickens's fiction, providing diverse visual sources relevant to the topic of each chapter (e.g., 'The S. S. Britannia' illustrated by Clarkson Stanfield, William Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness*, Daniel Maclise's title-page illustration to *The Battle of Life*, George Shepherd's *A West View of Newgate*, or Aubrey Beardsley's dandy-devil assuming a gentleman's disguise with a moustache and a bow tie), and drawn from such Victorian periodicals as *The Illustrated London News*, *Punch* and *Harper's Weekly*. Moreover, each contributor provides succinct insight into the major critical scholarship concerning each given Dickens text. It is noteworthy that the editor of the volume is Mitsuharu Matsuoka to whom numerous Dickens's readers are indebted for such invaluable online resources as The Dickens Page and A Hyper-Concordance to the Works of Charles Dickens. Although some essays tend to stray from the topic at hand and appear less focused, the volume offers an inspirational catalyst for reflection on multi-facetedness and complexity of evil in Dickens's writing.

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