From the Editors

The present volume collects essays that focus on the literary motif of journey or quest, the descriptions of travel in literary texts and travel writing, as well as textual constructions of the foreign and the exotic in nineteenth-century British writing. The essays discuss in various ways and through different lenses how journeys, voyages and quests may involve encounters with otherness as well as entail different strategies for responding to what is perceived as foreign, exotic, strange or unknown. Due to a number of historical, cultural and technological developments, the nineteenth century witnessed a series of transformations in the modes and purposes of travel and its cultural significance. In Alfred Tennyson's famous dramatic monologue *Ulysses* (1842), the mythical hero asserts: "I cannot rest from travel"—the iconic adventurer yearns for new voyages soon after returning to his long-missed homeland, Ithaca. Though not all voyages reach the scale of Ulysses's mythical journeys, the excitement of travel, the yearning for adventure and the fascination with distant or exotic locations play a significant role in nineteenth-century literature and travel writing. The rise of mass tourism in the period meant that traveling for pleasure became widely practiced in modern times, as James Buzard observes in his cultural history of tourism, *The Beaten Track. European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture' 1800–1918* (1993). Simultaneously, the growth of global trade, the rise of major colonial powers and the scope of colonial conquest meant that voyages to distant, exotic locations became for many a matter of necessity, and part of the picture of modern life. The historical-geographical transformations on the global scale in the modern period entailed the intensification of intercultural encounters and relations, including those involving appropriation, exploitation, and even genocide. At the end of the nineteenth century Joseph Conrad would write bitterly in *Heart of Darkness* (1899) of the "conquest of the earth" that amounts to "robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale."

The critical interest in otherness within literary and cultural studies, generally speaking, correlates with the wish to examine the categories of thought that regulate what is deemed familiar, commonplace, or normal.

Historically, otherness constructed as inherently inferior or threatening served to privilege and fortify the familiar norms and values of the domestic culture. This was, and still is, the case in colonial discourse in its various forms and guises, as Edward Said would argue in his *Orientalism* (1978). In their encounters with what is presented as strange or exotic, the narratives and accounts of travel frequently interrogate the cultural constructions of otherness. Such interrogation may help challenge the strategies of dominance and reject the stereotypes of inferiority. However, textual depictions of foreigners or distant places may support prejudiced or harmful worldviews, also by the appropriation and commodification of other cultures. The essays included in the first section of the present volume, "Journeys, Voyages, Quests," concentrate on the textual accounts of journeys and excursions, paying attention to historical and geographical contexts, narrative strategies, attitudes, rhetorical effects and broader cultural implications of the depicted voyages and travels. The second part, "The Exotic and the Foreign," includes essays that address the theme of otherness by focusing on the representation of foreignness or the uses of the exotic in literary texts. We hope that readers interested in travel writing, cultural encounter, otherness, ethnicity, coloniality, the Orient and, generally, the significance of travel in Romantic and Victorian literature and culture will find both sections valuable.

In her article "Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and the Spirit of the American Place," Francesca Orestano examines two accounts of a journey to America written by the eminent Victorians: Charles Dickens's *American Notes* (1842) and Anthony Trollope's "North America" (1862). The author convincingly argues that Dickens's travelogue records a personal quest as it focuses on the traveller and his process of self-discovery rather than the territory explored. Conversely, Trollope's travel book focuses on the territory rather than the traveller's subjective experience, seeking to provide readers with a well-documented account of the United States. Much criticised for his outspoken campaign in favour of international copyright, Dickens becomes disillusioned with American democracy, the eery theatricality of Boston, the system of solitary confinement in Philadelphia, or the issue of slavery. His travel account is characterised by lack of objectivity, lack of detail, theatricality, animism, techniques instigated by magic lantern shows, all of which trigger involuntary memories and personal nightmares. A diligent and conscientious traveller, Trollope, as Orestano avers, provides plenty of such mundane details as prices of hotels, tariffs of ferries, the price for hiring waterproof clothes or even population statistics, apologising for any unflattering comments he makes in his voluminous book. In effect, his travel narrative is fraught with the excess of information and becomes almost

unreadable as a result. In conclusion, Orestano claims that both travelogues reflect not so much the condition of the United States in 1842 and 1862 as the character of their authors.

Michael Hollington's article is concerned with the image of Italy in the accounts of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Charles Dickens and George Eliot, for whom the stay there turned out to be a breakthrough moment. The key to Hollington's intriguing analysis is the remark borrowed from Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston that in the experience of a new place, the first reaction is usually disappointment, followed by discovery of that place and, finally, a kind of enchantment. Consistently using the perspective of the 'disappointment then discovery' trope, Hollington examines the negative reactions of Eliot, Goethe and Dickens in their first encounters with Italy, falling short of their expectations based on other people's travel accounts, at the same time perfectly illustrating each writer's process of revision, in which the initial disappointment gives way to a personal discovery of the places and, ultimately, a delighted appreciation. The author puts forward an interesting idea about the influence of the genre of the travel narrative and the trope present in it ('disappointment then discovery') on the development of different versions of the realist aesthetic in the works of the discussed authors: the *Bildungsroman* in Goethe, 'classic realism' in George Eliot, or 'romantic realism' in Dickens.

Julia Wilde, in turn, compares the detailed descriptions of Ireland with the marvellous images of the Earthly Paradise in Denis Florence MacCarthy's narrative poem "The Voyage of St. Brendan" (1848) written at the time of the Irish Famine and a mass emigration to America. By looking at the portrayals of both places through historical revisionist lenses, she argues that MacCarthy creates a transtemporal bridge between two islands of happiness—the human and the spiritual one—in order to revive the Irish pride and hope. The aim of the poem, as the author points out, was to enhance the love for Ireland, simultaneously presenting America as the Promised Land, discovered by the Irishman—St. Brendan—who awaits his famished compatriots in their time of need. An important member of the Young Ireland Movement, MacCarthy skilfully turns an old medieval tale of St. Brendan into a narrative which could appeal to his Irish contemporaries and their national pride, enriching descriptions of landscape with references to local folklore, Celtic mythology and history. Although the idea to identify the Promised Land with America is not entirely new, in his poem MacCarthy, as Wilde claims, creates a sense of belonging based on the belief that it was St. Brendan, an Irishman, who was the first European to set foot on the American ground.

Irina Kantarbaeva-Bill carries out a close examination of Henry Landsdell's *Chinese Central Asia: A Ride to Little Tibet* (1893), paying particular attention to the rhetorical strategies Landsdell employed in his travelogue on central Asian sensitive boarder regions to circumvent the imperial and political implications of the seemingly missionary and proselytising purpose of his long and arduous journey. As an agent of the state involved in diplomacy and imperial surveillance, Landsdell was to check the perspectives of Russian and British trade in these areas and to investigate the possibility of passing from the north Pamirs and Karakoram ranges to India, among others. Conceived from a collection of sketches written during the 1888–1889 journey, the missionary's travel narrative includes chapters on the history, politics, culture and religion of the visited regions as well as a thorough bibliography on Chinese Central Asia, and thus, as Kantarbaeva-Bill notes, reveals complex interconnections between travel writing, politics and diplomacy. The author persuasively argues that Landsdell's detailed travelogue opened Chinese Turkestan psychologically and geographically to the Western readers and should be read by everyone interested in the intricate origins of the strategic and political significance of Chinese Central Asia.

Magdalena Ożarska examines the intertextual relationships between two travel journals, one penned by Dorothy Wordsworth, the other by Mary Wordsworth, both documenting the trip to the Continental Europe undertaken in 1820 by the poet William Wordsworth, his wife Mary, his sister Dorothy, and some of their acquaintances. The Continental Tour included visits to Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and France, its purpose being to nostalgically retrace, after 30 years, the itinerary of William's youthful trip, depicted in *The Prelude*. Mary Wordsworth often refers in her diary to her sister-in-law, frequently underscoring, unlike Dorothy, the awareness that two journal accounts of the Continental Tour are being produced. Furthermore, Mary's diary tends to report briefly on some aspects of the visited locations, persistently relying on Dorothy's writing to provide more details and more elaborate commentary regarding places and people, often remarking on ineptitude or inexperience as regards her own judgment or writing skills. This contributes to the general sense of humbleness and modesty that pervades Mary's journal, and much of women's autobiographical writing in general, as Ożarska observes. The article also comments on the immediate readers of the journals within the Wordsworth circle as well as the reception of Mary's journal among the friends of the family. While Dorothy writes as an accomplished travel writer, Mary writes as a (mere) tourist; both engage in a cooperative family effort to preserve their memories for future generations.

Przemysław Uściński conducts a close reading of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" (1797) and William Wordsworth's "We are Seven" (1798) as the examples of the peripatetic mode or the peripatetic aesthetic. The aim of his analysis is to investigate what the poems in question imply about the Romantic attitudes to walking in terms of their approach to Nature, the role of imagination as well as about the impact of the growth of mass tourism in the period. Disabled from walking, the speaker in Coleridge's poem combines imagination with his own memories to envisage the walking experience of his friends in which he enthusiastically participates. Thus, as Uściński contends, the poetic depiction of landscape includes both the physical and spiritual dimensions of the experience—the entire walking tour in the poem is imagined. According to the author, the poem suggests that a meaningful poetic encounter with the natural environment does not have to depend on a tourist's hunger for spectacular views, but on openness to natural surroundings and imagination. In "We are Seven," as the author argues, the rationally-minded speaker's problematic behaviour towards the rustic child can be read as the poet's own wish that the encounters with the world of secluded villages and their dwellers should foster relationships of ethical value, strengthened by a rediscovery of nature. Wordsworth protested against the construction of Kendal Windermere railway because he believed that the beauty of the Lake District was best appreciated by a solitary wanderer rather than a crowd of tourists.

The focus of Françoise Besson's article are Henry Russell-Killough's accounts of his travels to Asia: a series of articles in English published in an Indian paper, *The Englishman*, between October 1860 and January 1861 and gathered in a memoir entitled *My Journey from Kiakhta to Peking, down the Amoor River to Japan, accomplished between February and July, 1859, under the Patronage of the Governor of Siberia*; and a book in French, *Seize mille lieues à travers l'Asie et l'Océanie,* published in 1866. A French-Irish traveller and a passionate mountaineer, Russell is credited to be an inspiration for Phileas Fogg—a famous character from Jules Verne's novel—*Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872). Besson seeks to study how Russell's keen interest in Asians and their cultures reveals a growing awareness of his biased perception of otherness and turns into a true admiration for the visited countries, their inhabitants and Oriental art. Instead of differentiating between the coloniser and the colonised, Russell often focuses his attention on common elements they share, which may be seen as a step towards the understanding and appreciation of the Other. Besson argues that Russell's travel accounts of Siberia, China, Japan and India opened real and symbolical gateways between the West and the East at the time when the Asian countries were quite

unknown to the European traveller. His descriptive passages about Oriental art disclose a cultural exchange in his own perception of otherness when he sees European elements in Asian art.

The various representations of the foreign and the exotic in the Sherlock Holmes stories are subject of the article by Jacek Mydla, who observes that Arthur Conan Doyle did not hesitate to exploit his readers' ignorance as well as their prejudices concerning the non-British. Conan Doyle employs diverse motifs and elements pertaining to distant regions or overseas cultures in his stories, including objects, animals or people of alien origin and bizarre character, which undoubtedly help him to intensify the atmosphere of mystery, suspicion and uncertainty. In one of the most popular stories featuring the iconic detective, "The Adventures of the Speckled Band," an exotic and dangerous snake identified as the "swamp adder," trafficked from India and trained to kill by villainous Dr. Gimesby Roylott, provides a solution to the murder mystery, though the name of the snake does not correspond to any existing species, despite the overall tendency in the Sherlock Holmes stories to rely on reasonable explanations and scientific knowledge. The presence of the Gypsies in the same story, the mysterious poisonous root in "The Devil's Foot," Tonga—the native of the Andaman Islands in the novel *The Sign of Four* (1890), the oriental sanctuary of Mr Thaddeus Sholto in the same novel—are among other examples of avowedly foreign elements in the canonical Holmes stories, which, as Mydla notes, tend to intermix the familiar with the exotic, with the latter seemingly invading the otherwise secure space of the domestic culture (a textual trope reminiscent of "reverse colonisation"). The article discusses also two female characters: a frantic Brazilian woman called Maria Pinto in "Thor Bridge" and a "Peruvian lady" accused of vampirism—the wife of Mr Robert Ferguson in "The Adventure of the Susses Vampire." All in all, the exotic and marvellous elements featuring in the adventures of Sherlock Holmes add to the thrill and variety of the stories, but oftentimes they involve socially harmful preconceptions that demand an attentive and critical reading.

The fear of otherness, the perceived threat of "reverse colonisation" and the cultural anxiety produced by colonial expansion are prominent topics in Magdalena Pypeć's article which examines Charles Dickens's last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), as a forerunner of the "imperial Gothic" genre discussed by Patrick Brantlinger in his study *Rule of Darkness. British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914*. The term "imperial Gothic" registers the shift in the depictions of colonialism from a focus on triumph, heroism and adventure to a more disillusioned portrayal of imperialist rapacity and violence, with late Victorian texts often foregrounding the imagery of psychic

regression, disintegration, barbarism, darkness and demonic malevolence. According to Pypeć, Dickens's unfinished novel reflects his growing uneasiness about British imperial hegemony, reflected in the prominence of the themes referring to moral and spiritual corruption caused by expansive colonial policies of the British Empire. Dickens registers the belittling attitudes towards the dominated or conquered peoples and suggests that colonial ventures destroy foreign cultures to provide superfluous commodities for excessive consumption. The presentation of the racial Other in the novel (the Landless twins, Neville and Helena, with traumatic memories of their childhood in Ceylon) utilises the Gothic tradition and the prevalent myths about bestial hybridity to critically reflect on the contemporary racial fear of miscegenation and the eugenic myths of racial purity—views expressed at the time in numerous publications. The theme of opium addiction and the descriptions of an East London Opium den, prominent in *Edwin Drood*, provide for another connection between Britain's colonial mercantile expansion and moral degradation of the nation. The themes of psychic atavism, imperial darkness, addiction, crime and spiritual corruption all contribute to the inventive application of Gothic stylistics to imperial tropes in Dickens's last novel.

Dorota Osińska discusses the literary image of Medea in the work of Amy Levy, a late Victorian poet and essayist, to link the theme of otherness with both the exotic elements in Levy's Hellenic female revisionism and the feminist interest in the cultural construction of femaleness and femininity. Confrontational, powerful, transgressive and mysterious, the figure of Medea contrasts sharply with the established Victorian model of middle-class femininity. Levy's retelling of the myth in "Medea, A Fragment in Drama Form, After Euripides" (published in 1884) refuses to accentuate Medea's magical abilities, focusing instead on the expression of psychological suffering experienced by an outcast. The article refers to the cultural theories of monstrosity when discussing Medea's opposition to Corinthian patriarchal structures, underscoring her indeterminate, ambiguous status as both a threat to community and a scapegoat. Her refusal to remain quiet and obedient after being mistreated by Jason translates into a desperate female protest against rejection. As Osińska argues, Levy's interpretation of the Colchian princess emphasises Medea's alienation and posits her as the female Other—both vulnerable and terrifying; she represents the female wrath in the face of social oppression. Not simply a madwoman diagnosed by Victorian medical discourse, Levy's Medea is a compelling figure of an outcast whose tumultuous emotions and psychological complexity challenge reductive Victorian views on womanhood.

Covering a wide selection of texts representing different genres, literary currents and ideological perspectives, the essays collected in the volume offer diverse interpretative insights into the cultural significance of travel and foreignness in British writing of the nineteenth century. In sum, they aptly display the complexity of attitudes towards the Other as well as the diversity of textual strategies used to depict the experience of travel and to account for cultural difference.

Magdalena Pypeć and Przemysław Uściński
(editors)