

Editorial

Not just authors and publishers are important agents in the literary field who have a say about what gets published, sold, read, and commented on. There are many other players such as agents, editors, reviewers, prize judges, and not least, the readers. Our special issue will look at the majority of agents and institutions which are important for the literary scene in the UK today. Gesa Stedman starts off with an overview of recent trends and the attempts to resist them, with a special focus on UK-specific aspects. In the current cultural climate, acting on the literary field is not just a question of gaining prestige and recognition, but of keeping one's head above water with libraries and bookshops closing, publishers going out of business and the inexorable rise of Amazon and the internet posing a considerable threat. In how far the threat is also a chance, and what readers actually do when they buy an e-reader is explored in Sandra van Lente's article. Lisa Peter reminds us that the railway libraries in the 19th century had an important role to play in opening up the literary field to the masses. Rita Gerlach-March takes another look at recent cuts and austerity politics, and how they affect artists and other creative people.

Not everything is a disaster, however, as one can gather when one reads about creative bookshop owners of independent bookshops, resistant authors, the fact that Foyles has reopened in London and seems to be holding its own in the face of chainstore and internet competition. Chawton House Library has just celebrated its 10th anniversary, as Kathrin Berndt explains in her article and the Roald Dahl and Erich Kästner museums attract young readers and transmit the fun of writing and reading to younger as well as older readers, as Nora Hawich tells us. Literary Adaptations are as strong as ever, and are another important factor for the publishing world as well as for readers, as Jürgen Enkemann argues. Ingrid von Rosenberg interviewed Anne Chisolm of the Royal Society of Literature for *Hard Times*, and Gesa Stedman pro-

vides the readers with an insider's perspective on judging the Booker Prize from one of its former judges, Valentine Cunningham. The history of publishing is touched upon in Gesa Stedman's article on the 200th anniversary of *Pride and Prejudice* and a little light relief is offered by three 21st-century student re-writes of Jane Austen's classic novel. Jürgen Enkemann takes a look at Lawrence Sterne's relevance for his own period and for our own, celebrating the 300th anniversary of this fascinating and complex writer and his work.

Sadly, Doris Lessing and Seamus Heaney both died in 2013, and just before this issue went to print, Stuart Hall died aged 82. Jürgen Enkemann has written a short obituary for this issue, and will write a lengthier appreciation of Hall's role as a founding father of Cultural Studies for a later issue. While the politics column takes a rest this time, art is strongly featured in Jessica Fischer's column, and Johanna Zinnecker's article on contemporary writer, artist and academic Gemma Anderson. There is also a music column by guest columnist Carla Müller-Schulzke which looks at a recent trend, Afrofuturism.

When *Hard Times* ran into some difficulties in the early 2000s, because Jürgen Enkemann could not run it single-handedly anymore after years and years of doing so very successfully, the first to get funds to save the magazine was Gesa Stedman. She took the organization, layout, overall editorial control and subscription lists with her to Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, where she was soon joined by Sandra van Lente (née Müller). Claus-Ulrich Viol (Bochum) helped for a few years, then Jana Gohrisch came on board as well to help with the general editing, and Sebastian Berg joined them as the third editor. When Gesa Stedman and Sandra van Lente moved to Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, *Hard Times* came too. After more than 8 successful and rewarding years, it is time to pass on the magazine and to place it into new editorial hands. While Gesa, Jana and Sandra will all remain on the advisory

board, the new team will run *Hard Times* from Hildesheim, where long-term writer and member of the board Stefani Brusberg-Kirmeier is professor. Sebastian Berg (Bochum) will stay on as editor, joined by Georgia Christinidis (Rostock). Back issues can now be ordered from Hildesheim, and the website will also be run from there. The next issues on gardens (1/2014) and postmulticultural Britain (2/2014) are already being written and edited, and readers will have the usual mix of politics, culture, academic and other issues offered to them.

We would like to thank our subscribers and readers and wish the new team all the best for the future. The times may be hard, once again, but *Hard Times* will survive.

Berlin, February 2014
Gesa Stedman and Sandra van Lente

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Inhalt / Contents

Gesa Stedman The Literary Field in the UK – Who Can Resist Recent Trends?	2
Sandra van Lente A Book is a Book is a Book?! – E-Books in the Literary Field	6
Ingrid von Rosenberg Interview with Anne Chisholm, Chair of the Royal Society of Literature	12
Jürgen Enkemann Cinema and the Literary Field – With Examples from British Film Adaptations	15
Gesa Stedman / Valentine Cunningham “Loud Voices, Very Soft Ones, Pushy Members” – On Being a Booker Prize Judge	25
Rita Gerlach-March “Let’s talk about the Money” – The Latest Developments in UK Arts Funding	26
Nora Hawich Conveying Literature in the Museum: The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre	29
Gesa Stedman 200 Years of <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	34
Inaïs Nin, Jeanne-Marie Gaebler, Mateusz Fafinski, Artem Zaytsev Jane Austen Rewritings	37
Katrin Berndt “To Escape the Prison of their Own Minds.” A Celebration of Ten Years of Chawton House Library	43
Lisa Peter Reading and the Railway: Railway Bookstalls and their Impact on the Literary Field of the 19th Century	48
Jessica Fischer British Art Now	50
Johanna Zinecker Experiments in Interdisciplinarity: Art meets Science at Galerie Thore Krietemeyer Berlin. Exhibition Review of <i>Isomorphology – Riddles of Form</i>	53
Carla Müller-Schulzke Afrofuturismus: Modewort oder neues Phänomen?	56
Jürgen Enkemann Was hat uns das Werk von Laurence Sterne heute noch zu sagen?	59
Jürgen Enkemann Zum Tode Stuart Halls	65