Comparative Essays in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century English Literature

Franco Marucci
‘Franco Marucci seems to have read everything written in the century between Byron and James Joyce. The breadth and depth of this reading provides steady illumination of topics familiar and unfamiliar, and brings many new things to light. Professional erudition and persistence turn up many trouvailles and not a few truffles. A notable addition to scholarship.’

– Michael Alexander, Emeritus Professor of English, University of St Andrews

‘A remarkable collection of essays, displaying a far from common theoretical acuteness acting on dauntless erudition. Marucci’s explorations of the “dialogic element” in major and minor texts of Victorian and early Modern authors are always interesting and often surprising. When does Marucci, the most “Victorian” of Italian critics, find time to read and write so much?’

– Francesco Rognoni, Professor of English and American Literature, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore – Milan and Brescia

‘Franco Marucci traces a fascinating trajectory that invites us to rethink the works of iconic English authors at the intersection of two centuries. The compelling questions in this collection insightfully reinterpret a literary and cultural transition which, with its multifaceted tensions between tradition and innovation, continues to speak to us.’

– Nicoletta Pireddu, Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature, Georgetown University

This book gathers together essays and papers written over a time span of around fifteen years. Partly retitled and revised, they were selected for the book because they all focus on the dialogic element in a series of literary works produced in the period extending from late Romanticism to early Modernism. By ‘dialogic’, the author means the sharing of common preoccupations, the recursiveness of motifs, themes and patterns, the emergence of constants, a network of explicit or hidden confrontations. Dialogues may then arise between an author and other contemporaries in the form of an explicit theoretical discussion in letters or critical essays; or implicitly, and allusively, in inventive negotiations that respond to previous works through parody or adaptation. After a concise introduction stating the author’s theoretical debt to the insightful theories of the Russian semiotician and typologist Yuri Lotman, single essays discuss Byron, Ruskin, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Hopkins, Ouida, Joyce and T. S. Eliot.

Authors in Dialogue