

## Reports and Reviews

---

### The Poe Bicentennial Year 2009 in Spain

Christopher Rollason  
Metz, France

---

The objective of this article will be to offer a retrospective of the Poe bicentennial celebrations over 2009 in a particular country, namely Spain, and to propose some suggestions which might help account for Edgar Allan Poe's current high profile in that country and be useful in the context of Poe studies there. A few clarifications and contextualisations may first be in order. Firstly, regarding my own qualifications to be the author of this paper, while I do not actually live in Spain I visit that country frequently, have substantial contacts with its academic milieu, and have attended numerous conferences there, also publishing in Spanish journals (I am a member of AEDEAN, the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies). Of the four Poe conferences held in Spain over 2009 (in Albacete, Alcalá de Henares, Cáceres and Valencia),<sup>19</sup> I was able to attend three, presenting a total of four texts, three in English and one in Spanish, variously as papers, plenary lecture and round table contribution. Secondly, despite Poe's well-charted influence on Latin American writers and the mentions that will be made in this article of, notably, Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar, I shall be focusing on the Poe bicentennial as it was lived in Spain, not in the Spanish-speaking world as a whole. There were Poe conferences in 2009 in Mexico City and Viña del Mar (Chile), and various Mexican locations also hosted Poe events, but it would be beyond the scope of a brief paper like this to chart Edgar Allan Poe's recent fortunes in Latin America, and that task I therefore leave to others: the richness and density of the bicentennial reception in Spain alone is, already and in itself, a remarkable phenomenon. Thirdly, I should add that the Fall 2009 edition (Volume X, Number 2) of the Pennsylvania-based *Edgar Allan Poe Review* was in part guest-edited by the Spanish Poe scholars and organisers of the Albacete conference, Margarita Rigal Aragón and Beatriz González Moreno: this volume contains a wide range of useful material on the Poe-Spain connection (including an article by Rigal Aragón herself entitled "Spanish 'Misreadings' of Poe's Life and Works at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century" and a valuable historical study by Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan, "Edgar A. Poe's Poetry in Spain in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: An Issue for Connoisseurs").<sup>20</sup> I shall refer to this volume where pertinent, but will endeavour not to duplicate its content in the present article.

---

<sup>19</sup> The websites of the four conferences are: Albacete: [www.uclm.es/ab/humanidades/0809/poe.asp](http://www.uclm.es/ab/humanidades/0809/poe.asp); Alcalá: [www.institutofranklin.net/en/conferences/past-conferences/poe-alive-century-anxiety-conference-2009](http://www.institutofranklin.net/en/conferences/past-conferences/poe-alive-century-anxiety-conference-2009); Cáceres: <http://gexcall.unex.es/poe>; Valencia: [www.uv.es/copoe/organizacion.html](http://www.uv.es/copoe/organizacion.html).

<sup>20</sup> The Spanish-related material in this number consisted of an introduction by the guest editors (including a summary of the Albacete conference), eight articles and one review. Of the articles, six were on topics

In the publishing world, a good dozen commemorative volumes appeared in Spain over late 2008 and 2009, most of them illustrated and some aimed at the children's market. Many were listed in an article published in *El País* in late 2009 (Fernández, 2009): it may be asked, indeed, whether the Poe year saw such an editorial flurry in any other country. Of particular interest was the reissue of the complete tales, in the already celebrated translation by Cortázar, in a special edition conceived by Fernando Iwasaki (Peru) and Jorge Volpi (Mexico) which included a brief commentary on every tale, each of them the work of a Spanish or Latin American short-story writer born after 1960. This volume, published by Páginas de Espuma (Madrid), also featured introductory texts by Carlos Fuentes and Mario Vargas Llosa (the latter new), as well as Cortázar's own brief life of Poe. The editors declared in their preface: 'Todos somos descendientes literarios de Poe' ('We are all literary descendants of Poe') (Volpi and Iwasaki, 2008, 13)<sup>21</sup>. A second reissue of the stories in the Cortázar translation, this time with illustrations by Harry Clarke, was published by Libros del Zorro Rojo, under the title *Cuentos de imaginación y misterio* ("Tales of Imagination and Mystery"); the same publisher also brought out an illustrated reissue of *Arthur Gordon Pym* (the artist here being Luis Scafati), again translated by Cortázar. Outstanding, meanwhile, also was the volume *Siniestras amadas: 22 delirios necro-románticos de Edgar Allan Poe*, ("Sinister and beloved: 22 necro-romantic moments of delirium by Edgar Allan Poe"), the work of the distinguished illustrator Jack Mircala (published in Madrid by Ediciones Sinsentido). This beautifully produced book offered a selection of Poe's tales and poems on the theme of women ("Ligeia", "Eleonora", "Ulalume", "Annabel Lee" and the rest), freshly translated and illustrated by the artist.

In the area of academic publishing, the two journals of AEDEAN, *Atlantis* and *Nexus*, both highlighted Poe in 2009. *Atlantis* included articles on Poe in both of its 2009 issues - both in fact by myself, on Poe and Borges (June) and Poe and Bob Dylan (December) and corresponding respectively to my contributions to the Albacete and Alcalá conferences. *Nexus* devoted the first of its two issues for the year to the bicentennial, with contributions by the well-known American expert Scott Peeples as well as by three already mentioned Spanish scholars, Rigal Aragón/González Moreno (in a joint article) and Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan.

On 17 January, the Madrid bookshop Tres Rosas Amarillas organized the event "Una noche con Poe" ("A Night with Poe"), a "terrific nocturnal reading" of tales by Poe with a fancy-dress party. This evening featured the presence of a number of the participants in the Volpi/Iwasaki volume. Two weeks later, on 31 January, the Federico García Lorca theatre in Getafe, near Madrid, was host to a single performance of the play *Sombras y Preguntas* ("Shadows and Questions"), based on the life and work of Poe. The director was Natividad Gómez: the performance was based on an adaptation of a play by Alfonso Sastre, *¿Dónde estás, Ulalume, dónde estás?* ("Where are you, Ulalume, where are you?"), with additional material by the director. The result was an ambitious, indeed experimental work, allying

---

related to Poe and Spain. The review was my own co-written text on the Jack Mircala volume *Siniestras Amadas* (cf. below).

<sup>21</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this volume, see Rigal Aragón (2009: 42-43).

bold interpretations of the last phase of the writer's life to atmospheric readings of his late poems ("The Raven" resounding in English in the background, "Ulalume" recited in Spanish at the end), all to a musical background of "gothic" rock. Edgar himself was powerfully rendered by Carlos Gutiérrez, with all other parts taken by the actresses Ana Codeseda and Cristina Martínez and the actor Laure Ruiz. The play was performed for a second time on 18 April, at the Centro Cívico, also in Getafe.

On 18 March, the Universidad Complutense de Madrid hosted a one-day commemorative event, including a number of scholarly contributions, as well as a reading of "The Raven" and a showing of the film of "The Pit and the Pendulum". Next, the night of 23 April, "Day of the Book", saw a Poe reading in the prestigious setting of Madrid's Ateneo (Athenaeum), with readers and writers exchanging conversations and literary experiences. This event, held to a full house, centred on a concert accompanied by graphic illustration – the first of its kind in Spain – offering a fusion of music, drama and images that captivated the public. José Ramón García provided a piano accompaniment to tales by Poe recited by the actor Felé Martínez and illustrated by Jack Mircala. A large screen displayed Mircala's images from *Siniestras Amadas*; the readings included "The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherezade", "Eleonora" and "The Black Cat". Later in the year, round-table discussion of Poe featured in the programme of the Semana Gótica (Gothic Week) held in Madrid from 24 October to 1 November – the first edition of what is hoped will be a regular multimedia event celebrating the Gothic genre.

Elsewhere in Spain, in April the municipal council of Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz province, Andalusia) named a (new) street in the city after Edgar Allan Poe. The connection is, of course, "The Cask of Amontillado" ("*can you tell Amontillado from Sherry?*"); the proposal was made by José Luis Jiménez García, president of the Asociación Jerezana, member of the Real Academia San Dionisio de Ciencias, Artes y Letras, and assiduous promoter of the Jerez/sherry family of wines in Spain and worldwide.

The roll-call of Spanish academic conferences devoted to Poe over 2009 runs to four, hosted by, respectively, the University of Castilla-La Mancha (Albacete campus; 3-6 February), the University of Alcalá de Henares (21-23 May; organised by that university's 'Instituto Franklin' for American studies), the University of Extremadura (Cáceres campus; 19-21 November), and the University of Valencia (2-4 December). Between them and including plenary lectures, papers, round-table contributions, seminars and workshops, the academic interventions numbered approximately 125, with some Poe scholars participating in two, three or even all four conferences. The working languages were, in all cases, English and Spanish. All four were fully international, with the participation from scholars based outside Spain averaging 25% and including distinguished American Poe experts and others based in France, Italy, Switzerland, Greece, Poland, Canada and elsewhere. The American scholars present included Scott Peeples and Barbara Cantalupo (Albacete), Djelal Kadir and Juana Celia Djelal (Alcalá), Richard Kopley (Cáceres) and Daniel Ogden (Alcalá and Valencia). Sadly, there was no Latin American representation at any of the conferences. Hispanic interest, however, was not neglected, with some 15% of the interventions having to do with aspects of Poe and the Spanish-speaking world. All the conferences also offered

non-academic entertainment – readings, theatre, film, etc, and the last three were enlivened by two thrice-repeated accompaniments: an amontillado wine-tasting backed up by an illustrated lecture on the wines of Jerez (the brainchild of the already mentioned José Luis Jiménez García); and an exhibition of Poe poems in calligraphic form and multiple languages conceived by the Paris-based artist William Wolkowski.

The range of Poe topics covered by the 125 interventions was vast, with virtually all possible aspects represented. In the paragraphs which follow, I shall mention some of the contributions that I personally consider to be of particular interest, without prejudice, obviously, to the rest and recalling that, while it is impossible to mention everything in so short a space, the details of the four conferences are available on their respective websites (see note below).

All facets of Poe's work were represented – the tales in their various genres (Gothic, detection, satire, utopia, etc), the poems, *Arthur Gordon Pym*, *Eureka*. Arguably under-represented were his critical and theoretical writings, and the same could be said of the history and characteristics of Poe criticism (Poe's poetics nonetheless formed the theme of the Valencia round-table contribution by the eminent classicist Jaime Siles). The biographical aspect was not neglected, featuring prominently in the plenaries by José Antonio Gurpegui (Albacete) and Félix Martín Gutiérrez (Alcalá), while Poe's pertinence to the contemporary world was eloquently evoked by Boris Vejdovsky in his Alcalá plenary. A welcome feature was the marked presence of intertextual and interdisciplinary aspects: interdisciplinarity was explicitly part of the Valencia rubric and was strongly emphasised in all the conferences.

Interdisciplinary relations between Poe's work and other fields featured strongly in contributions highlighting such diverse areas as: Poe and utopia (Daniel Ogden, plenary, Valencia), Poe and visual art (Barbara Cantalupo, plenary, Albacete), the artistic avant-garde in "Usher" (Borja Menéndez, paper, Alcalá; my own paper, Valencia), Poe and French classical music (Michel Duchesneau, plenary, Valencia), Poe and American popular music (my own plenary on Poe and Bob Dylan, Alcalá), Poe and the Greco-Roman world (Juana Celia Djelal, paper, Alcalá; Ana González-Rivas Fernández, papers, Albacete, Cáceres and Valencia), Poe's reception and translation in modern Greece (Eleftheria Tsirakoglou, Valencia), Poe and natural science (Fernando Ballesteros, round-table contribution, Valencia), and Poe and psychoanalysis (Ramiro Martín Hernández, paper, Cáceres; my own round-table contribution [in Spanish], Valencia). Some of the more strictly literary contributions also connected Poe's work to surprising subjects in the wider world, such as silence (Mary Carmen Branchadell, papers, Cáceres and Valencia) or ageing (Marta Miquel Baldellou, paper, Valencia).

The facet of intertextuality and influence stimulated contributions comparing Poe with a whole range of writers and literary movements, among them E.T.A. Hoffmann, Baudelaire, Ambrose Bierce, H.P. Lovecraft, Ray Bradbury, Paul Auster, Belgian fantastic literature and French farce. Especially noteworthy here were Fernando Galván's exemplary plenary on Poe and Dickens (Albacete) and Antonio Ballesteros' two revelatory papers on Poe and the Japanese writer Edogawa Rampo (Alcalá and Cáceres).

Intertextuality was also to the fore in the contributions on the interaction between Poe's work and Hispanic literature and culture. Two round tables (Albacete and Cáceres)

were devoted to the subject. Papers on Poe and Spanish writers focused on Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (Ricardo Marín Ruiz, Albacete), Antonio Machado (Cristina Flores Moreno, Alcalá) and Emilia Pardo Bazán (María Carmen Marredo Torvisco, Cáceres), while the history of Poe's reception in Spain came under the microscope in papers on the role of Ramón Gómez de la Serna in introducing Poe to a Spanish public (Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan, Cáceres) and on Poe's image in the literary magazines of the Franco period (Eusebio Llácer Llorca and Nicolás Estévez, Alcalá). His presence in Latin American letters was analysed in papers relating him to Pablo Neruda (María Isabel López Martínez, Cáceres), Cortázar (José Antonio Sánchez Riaño, Cáceres) and Borges (my own paper, Albacete; Victoria Pineda González, Cáceres). Also analysed were aspects of the translation of Poe into Spanish (Isabel Tello Fons; Javier Ortíz García - papers, Valencia), and his influence on the cinema of Luis Buñuel (Pilar Pedraza, plenary, Valencia). We may add, too, Scott Peeples' fascinating plenary on "Poe and Pain" from Albacete, since it focused on "The Pit and the Pendulum", Poe's only story with a Spanish setting. All in all, it is clear that the right degree of effort was made to localise the conferences and relate Poe's work to the Hispanic culture of which the host nation is the historic epicentre.

The significance of the academic conferences, cultural events and publications that graced Spain's Poe bicentennial year is beyond doubt. These commemorations have had the gratifying effect of creating an embryonic Edgar Allan Poe community in Spain – indeed, given the strong international participation, a community at the same time not confined to Spain alone. At this point, it may be interesting to ask, why Spain today? The current 'Poe phenomenon' in that country is no atemporal given. If we take the fantastic aspect of Poe's work, we may note that the distinguished Spanish novelist José María Merino has argued that Spain has until recently been stony ground for the production or appreciation of fantastic literature. For Merino, the vogue of the fantastic which began tentatively in the later Franco years and has blossomed with democracy marks a rupture with the traditional Spanish preference, validated by the Catholic church and the associated social and political structures, for realism as the dominant genre, with the non-religious fantastic being subject to marginalisation. The trajectory of fantastic literature in Spain has, then, been very different from its history in Latin America, where it early on secured far greater acceptance (Merino 2009). Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan, in his *Edgar Allan Poe Review* essay referred to above, suggests that the nineteenth-century tradition was that 'Spanish readers favoured a naturalistic style far from the excesses of Romanticism' (Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan, 2009, 51). These historical analyses are borne out by the Llácer/Estévez paper from Alcalá mentioned above, which highlighted the decidedly lukewarm praise accorded Poe's work by the Franco-era literati. One factor which may help explain the recent Poe boom in Spain is the quality (and name value) of the Cortázar translation, which dates from 1956 but whose full impact came only after Franco's death in 1975: Cortázar is often referred to as the Hispanic Baudelaire, and his translations of Poe, a century later, have arguably had a similar galvanising effect, in both Latin America and Spain, to that of Baudelaire's in 19<sup>th</sup>-century France. These are complex literary phenomena which will clearly require further study. Meanwhile, the challenge is now on to find ways of building permanently on the gains of the

bicentennial year, and to take Poe studies in Spain to fresh ground, in constant contact and interaction with the very best international scholarship.

#### References

- Poe, Edgar Allan. *Narración de Arthur Gordon Pym*. Trans. Julio Cortázar. Illus. Luis Scafati. Madrid: Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2009.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. *Cuentos completos: Edición comentada*. Trans. Julio Cortázar. Ed. Fernando Iwasaki and Jorge Volpi. Intr. Mario Vargas Llosa and Carlos Fuentes. Madrid: Páginas de Espuma, 2008.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. *Cuentos de imaginación y misterio*. Trans. Julio Cortázar. Illus. Harry Clarke. Madrid: Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2009.
- Fernández, V. Terrorífico Poe. *El País (Babelia)*, 19 December 2009, 11.
- Merino, José M. Reflexiones sobre la literatura fantástica en España. In *Ensayos sobre ciencia ficción y literatura fantástica* (e-book), Actas del I Congreso Internacional de Literatura Fantástica y Ciencia Ficción, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, 6-9 May 2008, BEM On Line, 2009, 55-64, [www.congresoliteraturafantastica.com/pdf/EnsayosCFyLF/pdf](http://www.congresoliteraturafantastica.com/pdf/EnsayosCFyLF/pdf).
- Mircala, Jack. *Siniestras amadas: 22 Delirios necro-románticos de Edgar Allan Poe*. Madrid: Ediciones Sinsentido, 2009.
- Nexus. 2009.1: *In honour of Edgar Allan Poe*. Online at [www.aedean.org](http://www.aedean.org).
- Rigal Aragón, Margarita. Spanish 'Misreadings' of Poe's Life and Works at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century. *Edgar Allan Poe Review*, Vol. X, No. 2, Fall 2009, 36-48.
- Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan, Santiago. Edgar A. Poe's Poetry in Spain in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: An Issue for Connoisseurs. *Edgar Allan Poe Review*, Vol. X, No. 2, Fall 2009, 49-56.
- Rollason, Christopher. The 'Character of Phantasm': Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Fall of the House of Usher' and Jorge Luis Borges' 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius'. *Atlantis*, Vol. 31, No. 1, June 2009, 9-22. Paper given at Edgar Allan Poe conference, University of Castilla-La Mancha (Albacete campus), 2009. Online at [www.atlantisjournal.org/ARCHIVE/31.1/2009Rollason.pdf](http://www.atlantisjournal.org/ARCHIVE/31.1/2009Rollason.pdf).
- Rollason, Christopher. 'Tell-Tale Signs' - Edgar Allan Poe and Bob Dylan: towards a model of intertextuality. *Atlantis*, Vol. 31, No. 2, December 2009, 41-56. Paper given at Edgar Allan Poe conference, University of Alcalá de Henares, 2009. Online at [www.atlantisjournal.org/ARCHIVE/31.2/2009Rollason.pdf](http://www.atlantisjournal.org/ARCHIVE/31.2/2009Rollason.pdf).
- Rollason, Christopher and González-Rivas Fernández, Ana. Review of Jack Mircala, *Siniestras amadas*. *Edgar Allan Poe Review*, Vol. X, No. 2, Fall 2009, 131-135.

---

#### *Diversification and its Discontents: Dynamics of the Discipline.*

**9<sup>th</sup> Brno International Conference of English, American and Canadian Studies,  
Masaryk University, Brno, 4-6 February 2010**

*Jan Chovanec  
Brno, Czech Republic*

---

For three days in early February, the Ninth Brno International Conference of English, American and Canadian Studies was hosted by the Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno, the Czech Republic. The tradition of English, American and Canadian studies conferences in Brno stretches back to the mid-1980s, when Brno became a regular meeting place for researchers and university teachers in the area of 'Anglicist' studies. The latest event saw an important innovation: it was the first to be held by the traditional host institution in close cooperation with the Czech Association for the Study of English (CZASE).

While the early years of the conference were mostly attended by Czech and Slovak scholars, more recent conferences have become increasingly internationalized. This year's

event brought together over 180 scholars in linguistics, literature, translation and cultural studies. The participants, who represented ten different countries and more than fifty scholarly institutions, worked intensively in eight parallel sessions over three days. The unifying theme of the conference with its focus on 'diversification' was conceived to reflect the broadening nature of the discipline of English Studies, which has – over the past decades – become increasingly diversified and interdisciplinary, with a number of new approaches and disciplines gaining strong ground. The aim of the conference was thus to capture some of the recent developments in the field, bearing on traditional notions of language, text, communication, as well as identity and power.

The conference was opened by the head of the host department, Jeffrey A. Vanderziel and the President of CZASE, Professor Martin Procházka of Charles University. They were followed by Slávka Tomáščíková, the ESSE Secretary, who welcomed the participants on behalf of ESSE President Fernando Galván. The opening session was concluded with a plenary lecture by Professor Andreas H. Jucker (Universität Zürich), President of the Swiss Association of University Teachers of English. Professor Jucker's talk on 'Pragmatics of the New Media: Multimodal communication in virtual worlds' offered an interdisciplinary perspective on communication in such multi-user virtual environments as Second Life. His talk not only outlined certain ethical considerations of describing the multi-layered communicative situation and collecting data for research purposes but also highlighted some of the salient features of such multi-modal interactions, where people assume new virtual identities as 'avatars'. Using a variety of methodological tools, Professor Jucker pointed out some of the emerging genre conventions in Second Life and their relationship to other well-established genres and real-life situations. His talk offered a fascinating look/view on modern communication technologies, which are changing the nature of interpersonal interaction – where genre boundaries are often obliterated, traditional medialities (spoken vs. written) are merged, features of orality and literacy are deployed innovatively, and personal identities are constructed multimodally through text and image.

After the opening, the large group of participants worked in thematic sessions proposed by members of CZASE and other organizations associated with ESSE. All in all, there were 24 panels and seminars, convened by scholars representing all the countries of Central Europe – the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Austria, Germany, and Hungary. Many panels had to be run in several consecutive sessions to accommodate the large number of speakers, often with as many as eight different sessions running in parallel to each other. The sessions reflected the diversity of topics and interests of the participating scholars: there were literature and cultural studies on 'Reading twentieth-century (women's) writing' (convened by Milada Franková and Janka Kašćáková), 'Versions of Scottishness: Antagonism, carnivalesque, worldmaking' (Martin Procházka), 'Reception of Shakespeare in Central Europe' (Bohuslav Mánek), 'Urban spaces: Patterns of change for the British novel (Soňa Nováková), 'Cinema & Critical theory' (Erik Roraback), 'Irish drama in Europe' (Ondřej Pilný), and 'Emerging spaces: Urban visions of the popular' (Zenó Vernyik).

Linguists could choose from among ten linguistics seminars organized in several thematic sessions, with topics reflecting the traditions of Prague-school functionalism as well

as various discourse analytical approaches of synchronic and diachronic study of language and communication. The sessions included: 'Meanders of meaning' (Jarmila Tárníková, Jaroslav Macháček), 'Information structure of discourse' (Libuše Dušková, Jana Chamonikolasová), 'English in Academic Contexts' (Markéta Malá, Renata Povolná), 'Communication strategies in English/Czech discourse' (Christopher Hopkinson, Renáta Tomášková), 'Understanding patterns of meaning in language' (Naďa Kudrnáčová, Radek Vogel), 'Analysing verbal interaction in the media' (Jan Chovanec, Marta Dynel), 'The teaching of Old English runic inscriptions' (Christiane Zimmerman), 'Old English plant names and modern electronic media and techniques' (Hans Sauer), 'Didactics of diachrony' (Jan Čermák, Ondřej Tichý), and 'Integrating research in translation studies' (Renata Kamenická, Jiří Rambousek).

The breadth of topics was complete with seven seminars in cultural studies and literature, covering 'Stereotyping in media in English' (Slávka Tomáščíková, Božena Velebná), 'Constructing cultural identity: Discourse, performance, fiction' (Martin Procházka, Blanka Maderová), 'Canada and Canadian studies – 1985-2010' (Don Sparling), 'Fantasy, fairy-tales and young-adult fiction in contemporary literary studies' (Kamila Vránková, Šárka Bubíková, Marko Jandrić), 'Women and the grotesque' (Soňa Šnircová, Silvia Pokrivčáková), 'Translating Shakespeare' (Anna Cetera, Pavel Drábek), and 'Old and Middle English literature between genres' (Helena Znojemska).

As the outline of the seminar themes indicates, the conference schedule was quite busy, making it difficult for the participants to decide between the many parallel sessions. It was then the task of the plenary speakers to bring the large crowd together in the main auditorium and share with them the results of their latest research. Thus Professor Nigel Leask (Regis Professor of English at the Glasgow University, Scotland) dealt with nationalism and transnationalism in British Romantic studies, focusing on the transformations in the discipline over the last few decades. His talk questioned the earlier theories of post-colonialism and transnationalism, pointing out the links between nationalist and imperialist discourse in British Romantic writing and exploring the complex relationship between Scottish, English and British identities in the works of Robert Burns and Lord Byron against the background of British imperialism.

In a block of parallel lectures, Professor Ludmila Urbanová from the host institution discussed the linguistic workings of implicit dialogue in the language of fiction. She interpreted implicit dialogic interaction as a strategy of defamiliarization, pointing out the structural types that it tends to assume in fictional discourse. She also described the role of semantic indeterminacy (such as indirectness, implicature and vagueness), which serves to enhance the interactive meaning of such fictional dialogues, and the unconventional use of language with respect to the phatic function. The second parallel lecture was delivered by Professor David Malcolm (University of Gdańsk, Poland), who offered a phonosemantic analysis of Anne Stevenson's poetry, interpreting its formal features as markers of U.S. identity. He noted how the poem sets up expectations of metrical and phonological order, yet systematically denies the achievement of such harmony. The fragmented rhythm, sound, syntax, genre variety, elisions and juxtapositions of male/female discourse build up "a vision of US history and identity as non-unitary, fragmented and resistant to harmony".



The conference concluded with a plenary speech by Professor Martin Hilský (Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic). His talk on 'Shakespeare's theatre of language: Czech experience' drew on his expertise as both a literary scholar and one of the major translators of Shakespeare's entire oeuvre into Czech. His focus was on ambiguity and paradox in sonnets, which he contrasted with some plays. Hilský commented on his approach to translation "as an interactive effort in which the losses cannot be separated from the gains and in which translators are often faced with the ultimate boundaries of language".

It is almost a truism to point out that academics are perceived as living somewhat in isolation from each other, working on their own specialized topics. This is also the case in the area of English, American and Canadian studies: it is not always easy for linguists, for instance, to follow what colleagues in literary and cultural studies (and vice versa) are currently preoccupied with, if only because we tend to attend monothematic conferences where the chances of such interdisciplinary cross-fertilization are minimal. Also thanks to a good choice of plenary speakers – and their choice of suitable and enticing interdisciplinary topics – the Brno conference then offered its participants with much more than merely a chance to meet others and present one's own research. It has – hopefully – made scholars in both linguistics and literature appreciate that their disciplines are often closer to each other than they may think and that it can be fruitful when – despite the ongoing diversification in all branches of human knowledge – ideas are shared across the boundaries of the disciplines.

The Tenth Brno Conference of English, American and Canadian Studies will be held in February 2015, with the Czech Association for the Study of English once again acting as co-organizer. The organizers are looking forward to welcoming back to Brno this year's participants as well as hoping to see many more of our friends and colleagues from ESSE's various national organizations in Brno.

---

**María de los Ángeles, Gómez González, J. Lachlan Mackenzie, and Elsa M. González Álvarez, eds. *Languages and Cultures in Contrast and Comparison*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008.**

*Vanessa Leonardi*  
*Università di Ferrara, Italy*

---

*Languages and Cultures in Contrast and Comparison* is a collection of articles on three main topics: information structure, lexis, and second language acquisition. These topics are approached in a contrastive comparison across several languages.

Part I focuses on the way in which information is structured in a sentence in English, German, Spanish, Norwegian, French, and Dutch. Fetzer compares forms and functions of theme zones in British English and German. Her socio-pragmatic approach is supported by functional grammar theories and her research focuses on the communicative act of non-acceptance in political discourse. Fetzer claims that '[w]hile the theme zone is a universal configuration, its linguistic realization follows language-specific parameters' (4). Her analyses allow her to reach the conclusion that German is characterised by fewer

interpersonal Themes and 'the sequential organization of a theme zone is less conventionalized' (27) compared to British English. Hannay and Caro deal with rheme and explore clause-final focus constituents in Spanish and English within a Functional Discourse Grammar framework. They claim that although in some languages, such as Polish and Dutch, clause-final position may be marked, rheme tends to be in pragmatically unmarked positions in many languages. Their analyses highlight that 'clause-final focus seems in Spanish to be predominantly a structural issue' determined by its syntax whereas 'in English it is arguably a more discourse-strategic matter' (49). Gundel presents a contrastive analysis of cleft-sentences in Spanish, Norwegian, and English by looking at a translation of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Her analysis reveals that cleft sentences are more frequent in the Norwegian translation as compared to the Spanish version whereas 'the English original [is] somewhere in between' these two translations (69). Her results are in line with previous findings that acknowledged a significant frequency variation across languages. She concludes that the reasons for this phenomenon are still unclear but it could be a good idea to look for an explanation in 'the degree of contact with and influence from Celtic languages [...] which have a strong preference for the use of cleft structures' (86). Magnus compares the position of adverbials in French and Dutch declarative sentences. Her theoretical assumption is that sentence constituents can be either focusable or non-focusable. Whereas in Dutch all sentence constituents are focusable, including the whole sentence itself, in French a clear-cut distinction exists between the focusable and non-focusable. In Dutch any adverbial can occupy any position whereas in French there is 'a strong correlation between the focusability of adverbials and the positions they can occupy' (89). Furthermore, different adverbial positions in French signal different meanings as opposed to Dutch where this phenomenon is 'less pronounced' (90). According to Magnus, the difference in adverbial position in French and Dutch is due to differences in their pragmatic organisation which are stricter in the former as compared to the latter.

Part II explores lexical features of Swedish, English, German, French, Finnish, Akan, Italian, and Spanish. Viberg's study focuses on Swedish verbs of perception, which are compared with English, German, French, and Finnish using two translation corpora. Although some differences are found in both the function and use of these verbs across the languages chosen, she also highlights similarities in their lexical field. She concludes that 'Certain basic aspects of the structure of the lexical field of perception verbs in any language are motivated by lexical universals firmly grounded in human biology and general cognition' (170). Fretheim and Amfo explore the term *abroad* in English and semantically related terms in European languages and in Akan which is the dominant indigenous language spoken in Ghana. They claim that 'English *abroad* and corresponding expressions in other European languages are a type of spatial deixis words whose reference can only be resolved through extra-linguistic inference' (190). In Akan, however, there is no direct equivalent to this term and two words are mainly used in formal and informal settings although they 'have very different denotative properties than the English term' (ibid.). Pounds investigates the way emotions are expressed in Italian and English fairytales. References to emotion are more frequent in the Italian corpus and this 'may be linked to the moral content of the tales' (210). Pounds argues that the way emotions are represented in

Italian and in English fairytales 'reflect(s) the differences in educational functions' in these two countries (209). In Italy, the focus is placed on behaviour-forming functions whereas in England it is on problem-solving and explanatory functions. González deals with the feminine stereotype in gay characterization in English and Spanish. The allusions to women when describing gay people is due to 'the prevailing system of gender roles' according to which a couple is made up of a man and a woman (223). Words commonly used to refer to male homosexuals are drawn from several semantic fields, such as colours and flowers for instance. González analyses the non-verbal speech, the phonetic variation, the lexis and the morpho-syntax of gay language and claims that it is feminized as 'a reflection of the sort of feminization which some homosexuals feel in their "psyche"' (240).

Part III of this collection deals with research carried out on a variety of topics related to second language acquisition from a contrastive perspective. Jucker explores movie narratives in English, in English as a foreign language and in German, with the help of a silent Charlie Chaplin movie. Three communicative tasks were given to these groups of speakers and the way they dealt with them revealed that there are 'subtle differences' among them (247). Jucker, however, notices that 'German speakers tend to adopt pragmatic strategies from their native language in spite of their generally excellent command of English' (ibid.). Fuertes, Liceras, and de la Fuente investigate simultaneous and sequential English/Spanish bilingualism by focusing on (1) code-mixing within the Determiner Phrases, (2) null and explicit subjects, (3) Spanish definite articles and accusative clitics, and (4) deverbal compounds. Through a comparison of 'spontaneous and experimental data elicited from children and adults' (275) the authors reach the conclusion that there are 'clear-cut differences between native and non-native production' (294). Benson and Mayo analyse the pronunciation rules of the *-ed* syllable structure in English verbs and how these are learned by Spanish speakers. Their study reveals that 'more explicit instructional techniques and cognitive processing involving a higher level of awareness do result in greater learning' (318). Finally, the study by Díez focuses on 'intonation errors made by Spanish learners of English in secondary education' (327). As far as tonality is concerned, the most frequent error concerns the incorrect insertion of tone-unit boundaries as a result of lack of oral fluency. A distinction is then made between developmental errors and interference errors in terms of onset placement. Finally, according to Díez tonicity is a 'source' of 'persistent phonological errors for Spanish learners' and, as such, its 'rules must be explicitly taught' (350).

The book is very well presented and organised thanks to its division of topics into three parts, which allows a clear and logical flow of information. The variety of topics covered in this book provides the reader with a good and broad overview of past, present, and future research in the areas of linguistics, discourse analysis, and cultural studies. It is interesting to find studies carried out on less commonly taught and researched languages, such as Finnish and Akan. Nevertheless, it seems that Spanish is given too much prominence as compared to the other languages covered in this publication. Furthermore, the title could be slightly misleading in that the reader might expect to find more references and studies on the cultural and social perspectives of the languages compared. Overall, *Languages and*

*Cultures in Contrast and Comparison* offers an interesting overview of studies on a variety of topics in several languages, and it is a valuable volume for both scholars and students working, studying, and researching in these fields.

---

**Marina MacKay and Lyndsey Stonebridge, eds., *British Fiction After Modernism: The Novel at Mid-Century*. Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.**

*Yordan Kosturkov*  
*University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria*

---

This collection of sixteen papers explores new approaches in defining modernism. It is a natural response to the inconvenience of classifying a number of remarkable British authors whose major works chronologically belong to the mid-20th century: Graham Greene, Elizabeth Bowen, Angus Wilson, Olivia Manning, Muriel Spark, and William Golding.

While for a number of these there is little doubt about their place in high modernism, others do not seem to meet the criteria of any of its rubrics. Among the many proposals for identifying the characteristics of modernism, special prominence should be given to the approach advocated in the present collection. In 'late modernism' elements of modernism were adapted to 'new political and fictional ends'.

Rod Mengham in his essay on Muriel Spark does not resort to qualifications and conclusions on her method as a modernist or postmodernist. This avoidance of definitions is in itself significant and suggestive of at least two things. Modernism's demonstrations are not limited to a short list of aspects; some postmodernist aspects can easily be mistaken by a common reader as part of a modernist experiment. Back in the 1960s and 1970s Spark's work would not have passed as realism, but there would have been uncertainty about how to interpret her novels as modernist.

Jeremy Treglown's study of Olivia Manning has a threefold purpose. Constructing a sketch of this secretive novelist, he pays tribute to Neville and June Braybrooke's life of Manning, and complements this with comments by Francis King, Anthony Powell, Auberon Waugh, Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, Anthony Burgess, and Angus Wilson. Treglown contributes to the interpretation of *Fortunes of War*, rendering in a systematic order such themes and subjects as the condition of women in postwar times, cosmopolitanism, the treatment of past and present in the work of a novelist of the romantic type with no taste for formal experiment but with the sensitivity of a true modernist.

Rebecca West has never been denied the prestigious status of a modernist. Victor Sage offers a new analysis of her masterpiece *The Fountain Overflows*, outlining features of her prose as 'montage,' 'photographic double-exposure,' 'the screen as palimpsest,' and linking 'modernism with a mystical native tradition.' Sage draws successful parallels with James Joyce, comments of West's interest in Bohemia, lesbianism, and estrangement. Other modernist devices are the ambiguous point of view and tone, the double focus and use of the ersatz form of reality, with the world of art as an autonomous and higher form of knowledge.

Kevin McCarron's treatment of the later fiction of William Golding follows a similar method of analysis. Golding's fable-like narratives employ unconventional narrative perspectives in the depiction of the 'isolated man.' Golding employs monologues instead of stream-of-consciousness and experiments with narrators. Art is an essential component of Golding's plot, where 'reality is unlike fiction,' where the 'fairytale ending' is not necessarily a happy ending. The analysis of Golding's method shares the observations that modernism blends with postmodernism in a changing modernity.

The articles in this collection argue that most of the prose discussed deserves a revival: one suggestion is that realism requires pluralization, the other that the definition of modernism is very narrow. Modernity, claims Elizabeth Maslen, is ever-changing, politically committed or non-committed, cross-pollinated with the ideas of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Jung, exploring modern motifs – 'modernity is always impure.'

There has never been a good reason for excluding Henry Green and Elizabeth Bowen from the prestigious canon. Green has been acknowledged as the last English modernist. Born long after the 'canonized' modernists, he survived them all. His novel *Loving* appeared in 1945, the year in which – as many have argued – English modernism was over. However, Green attracted the attention of the French authors of the *roman nouveau* (Nathalie Sarraute, Claude Mauriac), as part of a revived French modernism. H. Green's prose 'surrenders all the conventionalities of fiction (traditional, realistic) – plot, authorial explanation, descriptive detail,' though still reminding us of Waugh, Pritchett, or Powell. James Wood proposes that we might think of two levels of enigma – plot enigma and human enigma – as two time signatures, describing also Green's writings as 'both mimetic and magically artificial, both imitative and original, both a report and a dance,' surreal comedies of a novelist of character, a metaphysical or psychological novelist who 'described from the outside,' and whose principal tool is pure speech.

John Mepham begins his study of Patrick Hamilton and Elizabeth Bowen by commenting on fictional techniques. He also makes a strong point on content and its interpretation of being 'modernist,' distinguishing between avant-garde modernism and high modernism. Mepham advocates Alison Light's proposal of 'expanded conceptions of modernity and modernism'. The modernists of the 'school' of Bowen, Rosamond Lehman, and Jean Rhys have produced fiction which is 'accessible' and close to mainstream or popular writing. Mepham's strong argument is that they are not uncompromisingly experimental, but write 'in response to [...] changes in modern life.' The new techniques and devices of the high and avant-garde modernist were incorporated in their new mid-century fiction. David Lodge has explained this option, including here also Christopher Isherwood, Evelyn Waugh and others.

Patrick Hamilton's work employs chiefly popular genres and this lessens his chances of qualifying as a modernist. Still, one can recognize features of changing modernity. Mepham here refers to the shift of silent film to talkies, not only as a contextual matter but also in terms of devices creating new artistic experimental devices, a reversal of high modernist rhetoric, new aesthetic possibilities, 'a shift from visionary modernism to auditory

modernism,' effecting a 'complicated cultural turn,' and offering new approaches of interpretation.

There has never been a good reason for including Graham Greene, Ivy Compton-Burnet, or Olivia Manning in the modernist canon. In Andrzej Gasiorek's chapter, discussion of the early Greene allows us to see the beginnings of what was going to happen in the middle of the century, during a period of erosion of the art of storytelling, of seeing reality differently, and using new methods of representation. Gasiorek challenges the conventional understanding of modernism, and, referring to late modernists like Djuna Barnes, Samuel Becket, and Mina Loy, comments on the ironic awareness of modernism, on the suspicion and over-evaluation of method. Gasiorek resorts to the concepts of *paleo-* and *neo-*modernisms and points out how the early (*proto*) modernists, James, Conrad, and Ford, were less destructive in their experiments. Graham Greene shares common ground with all modernists – his world is one of disorientation, of alienation, of paranoia, a tragicomic world of disintegration; his characters are anti-heroes, his environment is that of 'capitalism staggering from crisis to crisis [...] bereft of any sustaining belief system or ideology, fractured, skeptical, weary of life, in a globalizing economy, in a crisis of ideology, a cultural crisis, a world of disillusionment, a world of "no future," out of time, out of place.'

The eclectic work of Ivy Compton-Burnett has been characterized as both modernist and postmodernist, experimental in an odd way, exploiting atheism and divorce, eliding past and future both in real and in narrative time.

The chapters on Angus Wilson and Kingsley Amis may seem controversial. Amis never made any claims to be a modernist. His treatment of the modernity after World War II, however may be interpreted differently. Amis is one of the precursors of the post World War II novel: introducing the campus, the exploration of libido, love, and drink, introducing the low to middle-class protagonists, reviving the picaresque. Greg Londe suggests that if we distinguish between masculine and feminine traditions of modernism, Amis may feel more comfortable in the white dead male canon.'

This collection was originally inspired by the memory of Angus Wilson. Therefore, the discussion of his work in the 'after modernism' period attracts special attention. In his work and his method we may recognize the best of Waugh, Spark, and Amis. His comic work, however, is marked by a tone of neurosis and anxiety, of displacement and self-displacement. It is the world of Becket's unhappy, comic absurd.

Bernard Bergonzi's chapter ends this collection of essays in style. Bergonzi revisits the period, and critically revises his vision of the literary process during the 1950s and 60s, with its absence of any debate on modernism; its passion for the method of Proust; its idiosyncratic themes, some of which, like wife-swapping, appear very odd today; its ventures rather than experiments; its new provincialism; its cosmopolitanism; its 'cheerfully misanthropic view of the world'; its exploitation of the metafictional mode. None of these, however, ever roused any suspicion at the time of being very broadly realistic. However, as Bergonzi puts it, 'Most of the novels I have discussed could be placed in the capacious bag of realism.' Adapting a phrase by T.S. Eliot, Bergonzi concludes: 'Realists, yes. But they do the realism in different voices.'

The success of the collection should be attributed to its two editors. Their brilliant understanding of the conditions of the novel after modernism has allowed them to revive this 'distant dream' and follow the red line which offers an explanation of the cultural situation from the 1930s to the 1960s and after, from high modernism to late modernism, through their interpretation of the realisms (of intermodernity), all the way to awkward postmodernism.

This collection – whose *Leitmotiv* is that 'historical considerations became ontological condition' – offers a new vision of late modernity. It effectively explains the 'filmic narrative,' the montage and pastiche techniques. It also shows that in the overall mid-century re-writing of modernism, an appropriation, adaptation and adoption of modernist features was actively taking place. Randall Stevenson asserts that this is what generated a new 'innovative and creative cultural response' in the work of novelists like Rushdie, Mo, and Ishiguro. Contributions on Doris Lessing or Iris Murdoch would have enhanced this critical rereading of modernism.

---

**Armand, Louis, ed., *Avant-post. The avant-garde under 'post-' conditions.*  
Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2006.**

*Yolanda Morató*  
*University of Seville, Spain*

---

The title of this collection of essays chiefly exposes the main contradiction implicit in some contemporary theories sharing a widespread misconception of the Avant-Garde: that ephemeral aesthetics are unlikely to survive in "post"-movements. As R. M. Berry reminds us in "The Avant-Garde & the Question of Literature," we have to regard the Avant-Garde as an *advanced* position – for it takes its name from a military term – "running counter to the main current in history" (35). Do we still find this opposition in our days? And most importantly, is it still running? This is the area under discussion from the opening line of the introduction: "Is an avant-garde viable under the conditions of "post-modernism?" (1). The assumption is that it *is* possible, and the real question that remains is 'How?'

The sixteen contributions to this collection examine the different "qualities" implied in the avant-garde, and how they have evolved, from Post-Modernism and Post-Structuralism to Post-Historicism, Post-Humanism and Post-Ideology. In this close examination of past, present and even future we find *post-* and *re-* terms in plenty. However, the profusion of these prefixes is not a bad sign in this particular case: contributors to this compilation range from university professors to poets, from artists to editors, and provide this ensemble with a sound basis and a new twist.

If we look at the table of contents of this collection, we are bound to think that its organisation is also part of the avant-garde flavour. The sequence is not effective for the reader who is not in the picture. A good point of departure is the essay by editor Louis Armand, together with the contributions by Milesi and Berry. These essays embrace the ideas inherited from a first stage of avant-gardes and chaperon the reader to the crucial

avant-garde junctures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Armand's "Avant-Garde Machines, Experimental Systems" is a theoretical analysis of the historical interpretations of mechanisation, as "less a historically-determined" concept and more as an instrument "to signal a *condition* at the very core of cultural experience and cultural production" (194). Jargon is abundant. But so are the elucidating illustrations from the literary work of Swift, Sade, Joyce, Perec and Robbe-Grillet.

Berry's essay examines some of the well-known assumptions about literature during the first half of the twentieth century, and redefines Modernism not as a "response" to historical conflicts but as arising "from necessities internal to literature itself" (36). This assertion serves his purpose when investigating such concepts as time, space, art, and politics. Berry's focus on a 1936 lecture delivered by Gertrude Stein and on *AVA*, a novel by Carole Maso, bridges the gap between historical avant-garde and avant-post writing. Milesi contributes an illuminating research paper on "mythopoetics," retracing the connections between poetry and philosophy.

Particularly interesting is the idea of having a contributor whose literary work is another contributor's essay topic. Anne Vickery's article, "From Being Drafted to a Draft of Being: Rachel Blau DuPlessis and the Reconceptualisation of the Feminist Avant-Garde" is a fine companion piece to DuPlessis's "Post-Avant / Avant-Post: An Imaginary Conversation Inside Real Practice." The author of *Drafts* and *The Pink Guitar* discusses the occurrence of the term post-avant in different movements and explore such notions as historicity, feminism, and resistance. Later in the book, Vickery glosses DuPlessis as "poet-critic" and interprets the changes affecting avant-garde women in context. According to Vickery, DuPlessis's serial poem *Drafts* is to be seen against a background of "postcard poetry," as a "promise of 'Writing' in offering an alternative to poetry" (155).

In this post-stage, women are finally made visible. "Can a Woman be avant-garde?" Mairéad Byrne asks in her creative essay. At the beginning of the twentieth century women were not always ready to acknowledge the role they had. Vickery reminds us how at Barnard, where DuPlessis studied, "the male teacher [in a creative writing class] and his male guest insisted that 'women can't really write'" (135). Byrne's essay extends her questions to mothers, Irish poets, 21<sup>st</sup> century writers, fellow poets in Providence, and so on and so forth. Her assertions have a humorous tingle while stating the naked truth about the multiplicity of avant-gardes nowadays.

In "The Death of the Critic: The Critic-Pasticheur as Postmodern Avant-Gardist", Archambeau analyses the procedures necessary to remain "avant-post." If collage is one of the milestones of the historical avant-garde, pastiche constitutes a development of this technique, transforming the everyday materials of collage into the "authorial" pieces that merge in pastiche, with all its implications. Archambeau is well aware of this when he stresses: "If avant-garde is to be understood as something distinct from the artistic and literary traditions that preceded it, it must possess some quality or propose some project other than linguistic regeneration" (60). His article deepens on the notions of technique, structure and scepticism in the critical work of two contemporary writers, David Kellog and, especially, Benjamin Friedlander. His analysis builds solid bridges between past and present, although the last section of "The Death of the Critic" would have benefited from a more detailed explanation of his tenets.



The two chapters devoted to art are worth considering. "Neon Sigh: Epistemological Refamiliarisation," by Johanna Drucker, welcomes late Modernism's "appropriation of commercial and industrial methods, image and language" (77). Drucker's interpretation of Thomas Hirschhorn's "Superficial Engagement" presents the argument on pop and some contemporary artists as "late modernists." This controversial position is explored further via Lyotard's criticism in the contribution by Bonita Rhoads and Vadim Erent.

Lisa Jarnot's "San Francisco's Burning" focuses on poet Robert Duncan. In "Ethica Nullius," Keston Sutherland's investigates Jeremy Prynne's *The White Stones*; while Christian Bök's "Unacknowledged Legislation" deals with a comparison between Ubuweb and Oulipo. Michael S. Begnal's "The Ancients Have Returned Among Us: Polaroids of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Irish Poetry" is a subjective review of a group of non-"mainstream" Irish poets through the lens of *The Burning Bush*, where he worked as an editor from 1999 to 2004. In "Narrative Ecology and Encyclopaedic Narrative" Trey Strecker looks at the interesting field of "ecological fictions" (282) in a number of major literary works.

This collection contains two essays that deserve special attention. Robert Sheppard's "A Carafe, a Blue Guitar, Beyonding Art: Krzysztof Ziarek and the Avant-Garde" revitalises critical theory on the Avant-Garde with a clever commentary on Ziarek's *The Force of Art* and his redefinitions of art and literature. Esther Milne's "The Affective and Aesthetic Relations of Epistolary Presence" reconciles communication systems and digital culture with "intimacy, affect and aesthetics" (161). Particularly engaging is her exposition of imaginary presence and fantasised bodies in different modes of epistolary exchange.

*Avant-post: The avant-garde under 'post-' conditions* provides a convincing overview of new avant-gardes. In general, footnotes supply relevant information and references, but there is no bibliography in this collection; nor can the reader find a list of works cited at the end of any of its chapters. However, for those interested in the subject, this kaleidoscope of avant-garde ideas is a valuable meeting of minds.

---

**Michael Ryan. *Literary Theory: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.**

*Robert Reay-Jones*  
*University of Cardiff, UK*

---

The expanded second edition of Michael Ryan's successful textbook begins not with the preface included in the first edition but with a note for teachers that immediately draws the attention to the book's primary intent: literary-critical pedagogy. For Ryan's survey of 'the full range of contemporary approaches to the study of literature and culture' is designed as 'a practical introduction' to literary theory for undergraduate students. The preface to the first edition had also included an allusion to the old spectre of the Theory Wars in the specific context of literary pedagogy. It had underlined the emergence of an 'entire new sub-profession of disgruntled literature professors [...] in the US' keen to resist the encroachment of theory in their discipline, as well as the 'great tidal changes [...] in literary study over the last few decades, which have shifted the edifice of criticism off its old foundations.' These

dramatic descriptions of the conflicts affecting the profession were connected with the 'difficulty' of practicing theory, as well as the need for an accessible account of theory in all its rich diversity. While it is understandable that the preface has been omitted from this new edition – since the mood surrounding the debate over the uses of theory has become markedly less agonistic since the publication of the first edition roughly ten years ago – it would still have benefited from a chapter that addressed some of the pedagogical difficulties involved in the application of theory.

The chief of these has to do with the difficulty of choice that results from the heterogeneity of theory. The core of Ryan's survey is offered in a distinctly pluralist vein – an appropriate tone for a volume designed as an introductory textbook. Yet since this is a 'practical introduction,' one of its purposes must be to help in the business of 'practical criticism,' however theoretically-informed such criticism might be. The problem, briefly, is that since literary theory covers a bewildering array of theoretical frameworks, the teaching of theory needs to go some way towards providing students with the means of committing to the appropriate or preferred conceptual scheme in any given instance. Unlike the first edition, the second is no longer presented as 'a collection of practical applications that might serve as a companion text to Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction*.' While this may have been a handy selling point, it is important to remember that Eagleton's book had a specific thesis woven into its seemingly pluralist fabric – a highly politicised reading of the multiple avatars of theory that had a clear (Marxist) end in view. By contrast, Ryan's survey is not apparently committed to any particular agenda or stance, political or otherwise. In this sense, students might learn much from Ryan's survey, but they will be left entirely to their own devices in matters of choice and commitment.

There is indeed much to choose from in this book. Like the first edition, there are chapters on Russian and American formalism; structuralism; post-structuralism, deconstruction and postmodernism; psychoanalysis; gender studies; history; ethnic studies; as well as post-colonial and global English studies. This edition also includes an entirely new (and indeed excellent) chapter on rhetoric, and the original chapter on Marxism has been rewritten as 'Political Criticism: From Marxism to Cultural Materialism.' Each chapter contains a short introduction to a particular school of thought followed by a number of practical applications, or 'exercises.' The exercises are interspersed with questions that encourage further critical reflection. In addition to the primary texts already discussed in the first edition, there are three new texts discussed in the exercises: Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and Alice Munro's *Friend of My Youth*. Both the introductory sections and the exercises are concise and entertaining, and will be a useful starting point for anyone interested in the multiple objects of theory. Another feature of this new edition is the inclusion of film analyses, including *The Matrix*, *The Searchers*, *Apocalypse Now*, *The Birds*, *The Silence of the Lambs*, and *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Also included is a brief list of 'helpful websites' in an appendix.

Ryan's close readings are detailed and thorough, yet they do provide evidence that critical practice frequently exceeds the limitations of any particular theory. There are many (more or less acknowledged) instances of methodological 'cross-overs' in the exercises, where the critical resources of one theory profitably complement the analytical findings of

another. One may also wonder how often teachers at university level (especially in Europe) are required to teach theory in quite the way suggested here, as a one-way application of a particular school of thought. Ryan is a professor at Northeastern University, and it is true that theory has become a more significant and clearly demarcated item in the modular structure of American literary degrees than it has in Europe. The demand for such a textbook is thus possibly greater in North America than it might be in, say, Britain or France. That is not to say that this book will not be useful or popular on this side of the Atlantic, only that since the teaching of theory is not as codified as it is in American universities, students will perhaps not receive the kind of guidance in reading this book that they are likely to benefit from in the US.

Again, one such form of guidance concerns the issue of choice. The preface to the first edition had defined theory as something that 'forces us out of our habitual perspectives' in such a way that "'what one is" might come to seem a little less settled.' Ryan is right to say that the definition of theory is one which 'begs for clarification,' yet it is not altogether clear how defining it in terms of a disruption of our entrenched habits of reading might help to clarify its nature. After all, I. A. Richards's landmark 1929 study *Practical Criticism* – the work which popularised the phrase – aimed to unsettle its readers, but without the help of all those 'doctrinal adhesions' or 'critical preconceptions' that theory imposes. One common argument in the Theory Wars is precisely that theory has all too frequently overridden practice, to such an extent that texts are reduced to mere passive confirmations of the theories they are designed to illustrate. It is true that the introductory sections to every chapter contain many literary examples that illustrate the theories and complement the exercises – with the notable exception of the chapter on post-structuralism, deconstruction and postmodernism (the chapter on psychoanalysis includes just one literary example). Yet the extent to which theory and practice are dialectically wedded, both historically and pragmatically, is not always clear.

After all, every theory described in this book arose in particular historical circumstances, in response to specific cultural or social pressures, and in conjunction with certain literary traditions, genres or preferences. American formalism favoured poetry, for philosophical, educational and religious reasons; French structuralism preferred narrative, a mode ideally suited to the 'scientific' ends of structuralist taxonomy. Ethnic and post-colonial studies favour texts that promote or resist certain kinds of ideological agendas, and indeed are frequently informed by Marxist or post-structuralist ideas. Ryan had briefly acknowledged this fact in the first edition, noting that 'each school seemed to favor certain kinds of texts, with; for example, the deconstructionist favoring symbolic poetry and the Marxists realist novels.' The line adopted in his book, however, is to argue that 'the differences between theories – the way each illuminated a different aspect of a work of literature – would be clearer if they were comparatively applied to the same literary work.' Yet that is precisely the point: just as many varieties of theory are not in any way mutually exclusive, so more recent critical theories should not be construed as historically-necessary stages on the road to critical enlightenment. In this sense different theories cannot really be comparatively assessed or even applied profitably across the literary board. What is required

pedagogically, then, is a pragmatic and historically-sensitive account of the dialectical interplay of theory and practice, which would help to settle the issue of choice by providing criteria for the selection of a particular theoretical perspective. Ryan's excellent textbook will undoubtedly inform and entertain in equal measure, yet it may not necessarily help its readers to settle once and for all into critical habits that refine our capacity for practical commitment. After all, however unsettling or defamiliarising theory might be, we still need to settle on something, at some point.

---

**Dunja Mohr, ed. *Embracing the Other: Addressing Xenophobia in the New Literatures in English*. ASNEL Papers, 11. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2008.**

*Eleonora Rao*  
*University of Salerno, Italy*

---

This collection of essays presents a wide spectrum of criticism on emergent literature and authors, as well as a variety of literary genres: poetry, drama, fiction, and the short story. It ranges from well-known authors like Nadine Gordimer to less canonical writers. The collection includes essays on authors including David Dabydeen, Carlos Bulosan, Bienvenido Santos, Adib Khan, Carl Muller, M. G. Vassanji, Peter Cary, and Arundhati Roy. In addition, it includes essays that focus on literary themes associated with certain geographical areas, such as Maori literature, contemporary Nigerian women writers, West Indian queer fiction, Canadian Native theatre, and South African theatre.

The essays look into issues of discrimination and race, approached from a variety of angles and critical perspectives. There is also an analysis of the so-called "white angst" in post-apartheid South Africa in the works of John Conyngham by Jochen Petzold. The volume is divided into sections which are thematic and in one case geopolitical: "Theory, Writing History and Textuality," "Migrant and Border Narratives," "Transitional States," "Negotiating Identity and Alterity," "Diaspora and Orientalism," and "Canadian and South African Theatre."

In a long essay by Edwin Thumboo, "Conditions of Cross-Cultural Perceptions: The Other Looks Back" there is an attempt to categorize difference(s) and other(s) into a good number of subcategories, twelve in fact. To an extent, such distinctions could be useful for an understanding of the processes pertaining to alterity, but they should not be overestimated. Textuality, dialogism, and multivocality are the approach of an interesting long essay by Mary E. Modupe Kolawole, entitled "Multicultural Strategies and Alterity: Transgressing the Other in Contemporary Nigerian Women's Short Stories." In Nadine Gordimer's later fiction, Natividad Martínez Marín discloses an overall more optimistic vision of contemporary South Africa, in novels like *The House Gun* (1998) and *The Pick Up* (2001).

The attempt of this volume is to cover a number of underexplored areas of research in postcolonial criticism. For anybody interested in Indian migration writing I would recommend Mala Pandurang's "How Brave Is Our New World?" In this brief but dense essay she brings into focus problems relating to the positions of the critics themselves (which

is not innocent, of course). In order to bring these problems into focus she takes as an example and reads problematically the work of Vikram Seth. On a different note, Virginia Richter's excellent essay "The Civilized Ape" is much in line with recent scholarship on the so called 'post humanism.' It investigates the shifting and uncertain border between the animal and the human, through three short stories: by Edgar Allan Poe, Frank Chalice Constable, and Arthur Conan Doyle.

Henning Schafer discusses in depth the problematic question of authenticity in minority literature in his essay "Disappointing Expectations: Native Canadian Theatre and the Politics of Authenticity," making general and theoretical reflections on this issue that are indeed still quite necessary to this day, in order to avoid creating a ghetto of Native literary productions, among other 'dangerous' implications.

Surprisingly enough, there is only one indirect reference in the book to Emmanuel Levinas, one of the major thinkers on alterity and its processes of recognition and/or rejection through the face of the other. Theoretical references throughout the essays (but not in all of them) are to the work of Said, Bhabha, Spivak, Fanon, and Clifford, among the major ones.

Unfortunately the last essay in the list of contents, "Embracing Oneself and The Other: Overcoming Racial Hatred in South African Drama" by Haike Frank, is missing from the collection. Similarly the Notes on Contributors are nowhere to be found, although they are announced in the table of contents. As a result, the volume ends in fact at page 325 instead of page 338.

---

**María Bullón-Fernández, ed. *England and Iberia in the Middle Ages, 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Century. Cultural, Literary and Political Exchanges*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2007.**

*José Carlos Redondo-Olmedilla*  
*University of Almería, Spain*

---

We know that many countries have a union, or even two, in their history, and for some it occupies a central place. So it is with Scotland and England, yet what strikes the connoisseur of western physical specificities from the beginning of this book is the integrative term 'Iberian', a term wisely used to merge two geographical and cultural areas – Spain and Portugal – that fortunately/unfortunately have been living back to back most of the time. The designation is also wise as it captures the spirit of "mixing" without hinting at proportion (8). The work's title might suggest a slight unbalance, however. How is it possible that England is the realm on the one side and Iberia on the other, why not Britain and Iberia? But we know that geographical conventions are only agreements or arrangements, and that what truly matters in cultural exchange is the positive flux of ideas and their representation.

The introductory chapters raise many issues to tackle. The first essay, Jennifer Goodman Wollock's "Medieval England and Iberia: A Chivalric Relationship," provides vital information not only about the circulation of chivalric poems and narratives between England and Iberia, but also about other kinds of exchanges among historical knights and

royalty. If 'frontier' often implies 'separation', it may also be seen as a meeting point. As Goodman Wollock suggests, Iberia may be seen as a "historic boundary region where Christendom meets Islam." Iberia here become the site of what Goodman Wollock effectively terms "chivalric tourism."

In Chapter 2 "British Influence in Medieval Catalan Writing," Lluís Cabré admits that "the direct influence of Middle English literature on medieval Catalan writing is, perhaps, merely nominal," but nevertheless offers much material that makes up the Catalan reception of British works. A clearer definition of such concepts as Aragonese, Valencian and Catalan, however, might have avoided some confusion here.

In "The Shrine as Mediator: England, Castile, and the Pilgrimage to Compostela," Ana Echevarría Arsuaga analyses the popular shrine of Saint James in Compostela, the Spanish place of pilgrimage that was second only to Canterbury as the destination for medieval English pilgrims. Both Compostela and the road leading there enabled contacts and interfacing of all kinds between England and Iberia. This essay effectively demonstrates how the political scenario of the times influenced the cultural ideologies and how "shrines such as that of Saint James in Compostela played the role of mediator" as "Visits to those shrines provided an excuse for exchanges that would have never been possible in the battlefield or the royal court" (62).

In "Leonor of England and Eleanor of Castile: Anglo-Iberian Marriage and Cultural Exchange in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," Rose Walker examines the importance of these two queen's marriages and their cultural and historical repercussions on Anglo-Iberian realms. Walker provides a colourful comparison between the two queens, pointing out striking similarities between them, being both active royal partners that either founded nunneries or involved themselves in donating money to priories.

In "A Castilian in King Edward's Court," Cynthia L. Chamberlin studies the career of Giles Despaigne at the court of Edward II. From being a sergeant-of-arms or yeoman he rose to become a diplomat, serving on royal missions abroad. His career is valuable for an appreciation of "the practical mechanics of diplomacy between England and Castille" (110).

Jennifer C. Geouge writes on Anglo-Portuguese trade during the reign of João I of Portugal. Central to the development of mercantile relations was Treaty of Windsor of 1386. It was a pact of mutual support and bound both countries together against common enemies. This seminal diplomatic and mercantile enabled a marvellous international marriage of convenience.

Joyce Coleman writes on patronage under the Portuguese queen Philippa of Lancaster, who may have sponsored the Portuguese translation of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* into Portuguese. It was to become the first literary work translated into two contemporary vernacular languages: Portuguese and Spanish.

Amélia P. Hutchinson writes about "Os Doze de Inglaterra" – "The Twelve of England." It is the story – with no historical evidence – of twelve ladies of the House of Lancaster, who "having been insulted by as many English knights, ask the duke of Lancaster to help them to defend their honour; and how the duke had to ask the king of Portugal, his son-in-Law, to send him twelve of his best men" (168). The purpose of this Anglo-Portuguese romance may have been artistically to reinforce the Treaty of Windsor.

In the final chapter of this collection, "Chaucer Translates the Matter of Spain," R. F. Yeager uses the *Canterbury Tales* to establish Chaucer's first-hand knowledge of the Iberian Peninsula, especially of Spain and Spanish literature. Travelling to Spain Chaucer could have acquired some Spanish language and "could have (equally) acquired the "Matter of Spain" on the ground" (193), but certainly "the number and nature of the references made to Spain and things Spanish in the *Canterbury Tales* suggests both an interest and familiarity" (194), derived both from contacts abroad and at home.

This collection successfully puts Anglo-Iberian relations in the Early Modern period into a "greater historical perspective" (3). As this group of expert medievalists introduces a vast range of seminal works in the domain of Anglo-Iberian studies, it manages to stimulate the reader, who is continually alerted to the modernity of the Middle Ages, and made to realize that the multiple international exchanges that took place ought, once and for all, to destroy any vision of the period as one of cultural darkness.

---

**Peter Edgerly Firchow. *Strange Meetings: Anglo-German Literary Encounters From 1910 to 1960*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008, xiii+283 pages. ISBN 978-0-8132-1533-0.**

*Lothar Fietz*  
*University of Tübingen, Germany*

---

The imagological interest of comparative literature scholars in national stereotypes and their fortunes in the course of changing political, military and cultural relations among nations has not abated in recent decades. We may witness a number of highly interesting new approaches and studies in this area since the late Eighties.<sup>22</sup> Peter Firchow's research has played an important part in the exploration of Anglo-German relations between 1890 and 1960. In *The Death of the German Cousin: Variations on a Literary Stereotype, 1890-1920*, which appeared in 1986, he traced the transformations of the image of the good German cousin in a period of crisis. The positive stereotype, dating back to Adam Bede's positive evaluation of the Saxons and kept alive through the centuries in Anti-Norman circles stressing the common tribal and linguistic roots of the English and the Germans, was turned into its opposite in the years of political and military crisis and enmity between the two nations.

*Strange Meetings*, which came out shortly before the author's premature death in 2008, comprises a collection of five revised and updated versions of articles written in the 1990s, and may be considered a sequel to *The Death of the German Cousin*. Firchow undertakes "to

---

<sup>22</sup> See Hans-Jürgen Diller, ed., *Images of Germany* (Heidelberg, 1986), Günter Blaicher, *Das Deutschlandbild in der englischen Literatur* (Darmstadt, 1992), Franz Stanzel, ed., *Intimate Enemies: English and German Literary Reactions to the Great War 1914-1918* (Heidelberg, 1993), *idem*, ed. *Europäischer Völkerspiegel: Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg, 1999), Gerhard Müller-Schwefe, *Deutsche erfahren England: Englandbilder der Deutschen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 2007), and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, *Images of Germany in American Literature* (Iowa, 2007).

portray the development of British conceptions and reconceptions and misconceptions of Germany and Germans from about 1910 to about 1960" (xii). The approach he takes to the problem is, however, slightly different from that in his first study. The imagological interest in the productivity and transformation of a national stereotype is still at the back of his mind, but in this new book the emphasis is to a much greater extent on the portrayal of individual minds conditioned by stereotypical views and on their personal reactions in the encounters with members of the hostile nation. Wilfred Owen's poem "Strange Meeting" offers, as it were, the missing link in the chain of modifications of stereotypical views taking place in a changing climate of opinion. The shift of emphasis from the analysis of generally shared stereotypes to the exploration of the individual experiences of a limited number of English authors largely accounts for the episodic and heterogeneous structure of *Strange Meetings*.

All the articles assembled in this volume show Firchow's acute awareness of certain lacunae in the biographies of his authors and his scholarly interest in filling the gaps. In the first chapter entitled "Sunlight in the Hofgarten: Eliot, Lawrence and Brooke in pre-1914 Munich," the question as to why Eliot's *The Waste Land* "should begin in Munich rather than anywhere else" (25) triggers an interesting investigation of Eliot's stay in Munich in 1911 where he might have met Marie von Larisch who – as had been known since Morris's article "Marie, Marie, Hold on Tight" (1954) – has left traces in *The Waste Land* and who was equally familiar with the suicide of Crown Prince Rudolf and Baroness Mary von Vetsera and with King Ludwig's drowning in Königsee. Firchow establishes a valuable link between those historical events and the complex "love-death" and "death-by-drowning" motifs in *The Waste Land*, thus adding interesting details concerning the manifold sources Eliot presumably tapped.

With the same intention of filling biographical gaps Firchow extends his investigation to D. H. Lawrence and Rupert Brooke even though – apart from their pre-1914 stays in Munich – they have little in common with T. S. Eliot. In these parts of Chapter 1 the focus is primarily on the imagological question of how anti-German feelings manifest themselves or are even modified through personal encounters. The positive attitude Lawrence showed toward Munich and his "enthusiasm for the Bavarian landscape and flora" (41) failed to weaken the "habitual Hun baiting of the superior Britisher" (41), as becomes obvious in his essays and in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. But owing to the repressions he had suffered in Britain because of his illicit "alliance" with Frieda von Richthoven, his anti-German feelings combined with an equally strong anti-British mood. He objected as fiercely to the moral self-righteousness of the British in general as Rupert Brooke reacted to his "domineering, puritanical mother" (48). The experience of the liberally bohemian "spirit" of Munich, however, prevented neither of them from maintaining their anti-German prejudices.

In hindsight Lawrence's and Brooke's individual reactions to Germany and Germans appear to be representative of a general trend which gathered momentum and gained in intensity at the outbreak of World War I which marked a new stage in the Anglo-German political and cultural relations. In 1993, when a shorter version of "Shakespeare, Goethe and the War of Professors, 1914-1918" first appeared, Firchow complained about the fact that



“the study of relations on the part of academic literary professionals has been relatively neglected” (56). The updated version, which now figures as Chapter 2 in *Strange Meetings*, presents a highly detailed and well-documented picture of the stance that literary scholars took in the climate of a growing hostility between Britain and Germany. Firchow deals with this problem in terms of a conflict between the demand of scholarly objectivity, on the one hand, and nationalistic to chauvinistic commitment, on the other. As was to be expected, nationalism took precedence over professional integrity in both countries, though in the academic war of words the German camp of professors, such as Wilhelm Franz (*Britannien und der Krieg*, 1914), Friedrich Brie (*Imperialistische Strömungen in der englischen Literatur*, 1916), Levin Ludwig Schücking (*Der englische Volkscharakter*, 1915), and Alois Brandl (*Byron im Kampf mit der englischen Politik*, 1915), never reacted as hatefully as did the Oxford Professor of English, Sir Walter Raleigh,<sup>24</sup> “the staunchest despiser of German Shakespearians (and Germans generally)” (70). Together with others he took professional and national exception to the Germans for having, as it were, appropriated and arrogantly tried to “naturalize” their English Shakespeare and declared him to be a vital part of “[their] spiritual armament,” as Alois Brandl, the president of the German Shakespeare Society, put it in 1915. Dealing with major scholars of English and German literature and investigating developments in cultural institutions, such as the German Shakespeare Society and the English Goethe Society, Firchow succeeds in embedding the academic controversy into an overall climate of opinion and the larger political and cultural context characteristic of the early twentieth century.

The following chapter “Herr Issywoo (Cristopher Isherwood) Discovers Berlin” lacks that balance and complexity. Giving special pride of place again to an individual writer and his encounters in a specific town is reminiscent of the approach taken to the biographical interlude of T. S. Eliot in Munich. Whatever induced Firchow to concentrate on Isherwood remains an open question. As is well known the Berlin of the nineteen-twenties enjoyed the reputation of an emancipated metropolis especially among English visitors with a homosexual orientation. Without going into detail Firchow draws attention to a number of English tourists, such as Eddy and Vita Sackville-West, Brian Howard, John Layard and others who preferred Berlin for similar reasons as Isherwood and who thus contributed to the lopsided view of Berlin as nothing but a dissolute city. Seen through the eyes of a homosexual libertine Berlin was logically bound to appear as a “bugger’s daydream,” as Auden put it (116), and Firchow explores the stereotypical narrowness of Isherwood’s perspective with abundant though occasionally also redundant detail. The question arises as to why Firchow did not extend his study to a control group of visitors of a different background, orientation, and profession. One could think of Douglas Reed, the Berlin correspondent for the London *Times*, Harold Nicolson serving the Foreign Office in Berlin, Maurice Bowra, the later Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, or Cyril Connolly, who came to know George Orwell at school and who later co-edited *Horizon* with Stephen Spender. Sexual orientation certainly is an important aspect, but so is political orientation. A

---

<sup>24</sup> *Shakespeare’s England* (1916), and *England and the War* (1918).

comparative analysis of the control group suggested above and of the political attitudes of the would-be Marxists Isherwood, Auden, and Spender within the overall political situation of the Weimar Republic would have added many a facet to the picture of 'Herr Issywoo' in Berlin.

From a chronological point of view Chapter 4, entitled "The Attractions of Fascism for the Literary Avant-Garde in Britain between the Wars," looks like a sequel to the preceding chapter, but the shift of paradigm between chapters cannot be overlooked: exclusive emphasis is now laid on the political orientation of writers such as Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, Pound, and Shaw who had – or were accused of having – sympathized with fascist ideas. In order to ascertain whether there were proto-fascists among the avant-garde it is indispensable to differentiate between the real face of fascism and what fascism was taken for from the external British point of view by both accusers and accused.

Drawing on contemporary sources Firchow has taken great pains to compile a catalogue of criteria for the definition of fascism. It comprises aspects such as nationalism, imperialism, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-communism, opposition to egalitarian democracy, authoritarianism, and leadership. All these aspects, it is true, overlap with a number of features characteristic of fascist ideology and practice, but the catalogue is not comprehensive enough to yield a valid description of fascism as it was experienced by its victims from inside the system, and unmasked – for others – only in hindsight. Most of the members of the literary avant-garde discussed by Firchow were unaware of two fundamental facts: of the totalitarian ideology and of the fact that, semantically speaking, the words 'Duce', 'Führer' and 'leader' were *faux amis* meaning different things in different political and cultural contexts. From an external point of view they failed to realize that the fascist idea of leadership was not identical with the leadership they had in mind, the leadership of a cultural elite advocating at the same time the right of personal freedom of which any fascist regime would have deprived them.

Owing to the narrow catalogue of criteria of fascism derived from misconceptions about fascism in the English literary avant-garde and Firchow's reluctance to complement it, the question as to whether there were "No British Literary Fascists After All?" (214) was relegated to the end of the chapter which would have gained in accuracy and conciseness if Firchow had taken up Terry Eagleton's suggestion to differentiate between fascists and reactionaries. In addition to that, he would have hesitated to maintain his judgement of Lawrence as a proto-fascist if he had held his creed of personal freedom against the background of fascist totalitarianism, the implications of which he apparently ignored.<sup>25</sup> If all this had been taken into account, the more adequate title of the chapter would rather have been "The Attractions and Misconceptions of Fascism on the Part of the British Literary Avant-Garde..."

The final chapter – "W. H. Auden and Josef Weinheber: Poets of Kirchstetten" – is of a less problematic nature. When first published in 1992 the article was meant to fill a gap in Auden's biography and to cast light on possible reasons for choosing Kirchstetten of all

---

<sup>25</sup> Lothar Fietz, "Politik und Roman: David Herbert Lawrence und Aldous Huxley." *Englische Literatur und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by P. Goetsch and H.-J. Müllerbrock, (Wiesbaden, 1981), 111-20.

places as his spring and summer domicile far away from the madding crowd of a city such as New York. That one of the reasons might have been Weinheber, who committed suicide in 1945 and with whose fate and poetry Auden became acquainted only during his 'Austrian years' between 1958 and 1973, lacks a good deal of plausibility. The more interesting point Firchow focuses on concerns certain similarities in the lives of the two poets who never met personally: feelings of guilt for having collaborated with the Nazis, on the part of Weinheber, and Auden's feelings of guilt for having turned a blind eye to the atrocities of Stalinism. Firchow interprets Auden's attempt to exonerate Weinheber as an attempt at self-exoneration, a thesis confirmed by the revisions to which Auden submitted some of the 'committed' poems of the thirties. This is a good chapter to conclude a well-researched book that convincingly reflects Firchow's great scholarly abilities of combining biographical research with textual interpretation and analysis.

---

**Dinah Birch. *Our Victorian Education*. Malden, MA and London: 2007.**

*Julia Straub*  
*University of Berne, Switzerland*

---

Dinah Birch's *Our Victorian Education* is based on the assumption that there are important associations between nineteenth-century ideas of teaching and learning and the way we think about education today. Convinced of the timeliness of such connections, the author aims to show that the ways in which we think about education today reflect patterns of thought we have inherited from the Victorians. She sets out to answer whether there is value to be gained from this legacy for contemporary debates on education and whether the issues that this subject confronts us with are rooted in Victorian attitudes and approaches.

There are two impulses which play into Birch's line of argument. On the one hand, there are obvious problems in the field of education, highlighted by influential and controversial educational surveys such as PISA, which our Western societies could be said to share with the Victorians. Dinah Birch unravels these persistent inadequacies and conflicts sensitively. They are related to, for example, controversial inequalities in educational status and privilege, on the grounds of gender, class, or religion; the victimisation of individual pupils for said reasons; and the tension arising from authority versus autonomy (as regards schools and teachers, but also pedagogical approaches towards pupils). Then and now the harsh realities provided by, for example, inflexible curricula, lack of funds, or inadequate examination methods clash with the idealism and social ambition fuelling the commitment of institutions and members of the teaching profession alike.

On the other hand, Victorian literature – the author is professor of English Literature at Liverpool University and has published widely on this period – provides a rich repository of fictional and non-fictional texts which partake in and reflect the century's intense engagement with learning, teaching and knowledge. The Victorian novel abounds with acerbic remarks on the teaching profession and provides a plethora of powerful images of the Victorian classroom. Dinah Birch's book brings together a selection of mostly well-

known texts by novelists and poets such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Alfred Lord Tennyson, or Charlotte Brontë, as well as the works by Victorian sages Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin. Birch's tour of Victorian classics, including *Our Mutual Friend*, *The Mill on the Floss* or *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, does not allow for detailed literary analyses, yet is enjoyable and her textual examples are illustrative and accessible. They leave no doubt that education mattered to Victorian writers and that the debates surrounding it were lively, serious and yet available for comic or satiric appropriation (the latter representing a dimension conspicuously absent from contemporary debates). While the author does not fail to point out parallels and connections with our current situation as she develops her argument in the individual chapters, expectations gradually build up as the final chapter promises to contain the book's actual manifesto part.

The greatest challenge Dinah Birch's book faces derives from the expectations evoked by the genre of the manifesto. The title, for example, lacks the kind of controversy or provocative piquancy often to be found in works belonging to this genre. Surely any parent would dread to believe that the present-day classroom protocol resembles that of Dickens' time and it is exactly this gloomy association that the title picks up on. Yet it can be understood as a truism: any historical approach to contemporary concepts and systems of education will always have to acknowledge the central position of the nineteenth century in the history of education. This was, after all, the time when crucial legislation was passed in Britain, establishing structures that have informed the school system and teaching methods ever since. So in a factual way, today's educational system owes something to the Victorian period. The numerous late-Victorian school buildings still in use today are visible proof of this legacy: their foundation was laid more than hundred years ago and although their walls are old, their interior is often, if not swish, then at least heavily modernised.

More importantly, manifestos tend to be prognostic, i.e. they look ahead into the future. However, by virtue of the topic, this manifesto is mostly taken up by the author's, albeit intriguing, examination of the past. After the first few chapters one cannot help wondering how the transition will be made from prim Victorian governesses to performance-related pay for teachers in the twenty-first century, from Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* and their insistence on a common humanity to school yard bullying, from Tennyson's disdain for utilitarian knowledge to the number of GCSEs taken by working class pupils. Thus the book's main problem is that the genre it employs is not easily reconcilable with the subject of this particular volume. The final chapter, entitled "New Conversations," does not posit extravagant claims, nor does the book as a whole deliver mind-boggling re-readings of Victorian classics or startling conclusions drawn from a comparison of the two periods. The overall tone is subdued, suggestive rather than clamorous. Yet this manifesto has its own hero, as Birch herself calls him (144), and that is John Ruskin. Birch's discussion of works such as *The Stones of Venice* or *Fors Clavigera* provides the most heartfelt and gripping moments of her book, as they not only reflect the author's enthusiasm for and expert knowledge of this author, but underline the relevance and topicality of his works, suggesting that the sagacity of his cultural criticism should be heard in contemporary debates.

*Our Victorian Education* succeeds in disclosing the dilemmas and contradictions which trouble today's pedagogues and politics as much as they plagued Ruskin and his contemporaries. The perpetual conflict appears to be that there is an educational system which consists of institutions and practices on the one hand, and our understanding of education as something that harbours a certain kind of idealism on the other. And if this was not enough, there is a further philosophical discourse which blends into educational matters, and that is epistemology, i.e. the ways in which we come to terms with new knowledge, how we select, process and reasonably convey it. Dinah Birch excels at working out the intersections of these fields and their intimate connection with the period's literature. While her book may not hold many surprises in store for fellow Victorianists, it is of great value to readers interested in the development of educational discourse and its interesting dialogue with literary practice.

---

**Nicky Marsh. *Money, Speculation and Finance in Contemporary British Fiction*. London: Continuum, 2007. vii + 176 pp. ISBN 978-0-8264-9544-0.**

**John Wrighton**  
*Aberystwyth University, Wales*

---

*All that will ever break capitalism, is capitalists. The faster they run the more strain on their heart ... they're beginning a credit bonanza that would have made their fathers jump out of windows. They'll do new record times, run faster than anyone thought possible. And then the heart will give out ... It will look like money, though it won't actually be money. But you can be sure of one thing: it will be quite fatal.* Raymond Williams, *Loyalties* (1989)

*This isn't business ... It's not about buying and selling real commodities. It's all on paper, or computer screens. It's abstract. It has its own rather seductive jargon – arbitrageur, deferred futures, floating rate. It's rather like literary theory.* David Lodge, *Nice Work* (1993)

*We have involved ourselves in a colossal muddle, having blundered in the control of a delicate machine, the working of which we do not understand.* John Maynard Keynes (1930)

Commenting on current government policy that “borrowing is the way to get us all rich again” Colin Burrow opened a recent piece in the *Guardian Review* by citing Mark Twain's oft quoted maxim: “Truth is obviously stranger than fiction.” It seems a fair observation for this age of the curious paradox when “debt” for instance has come to be called “credit” (the latter originating from the Latin “credere”, meaning “belief”). Yet for those with a vested interest in truth or fiction we will no doubt regret the imbalance noted by Nicky Marsh in her latest book *Money, Speculation and Finance in Contemporary British Fiction*, between the “excess of information about the money economy” and the “paucity of our understanding of it” (143). Whilst, as Marsh rightly notes, “there is no innocent adversarial place from which to read the money economy” (144), this book is an excellent, if not comfortable, place to begin.

As has become a familiar hallmark of titles from Continuum's Literary Studies series, Marsh does not shy away from her complex subject nor does she dumb-down the analysis

and reasoning. Indeed, to sum-up Marsh's wide-reaching and sophisticated thesis is no easy task. Nonetheless, my own reading would suggest that her analysis is broadly predicated upon (and explanatory of) her central argument. It goes thus: the "paradoxical complexity" (1) of the money economy – existing only in abstract terms as digits on computer screens – is its fictitiousness, and so fiction, particularly in its self-reflexive capacity to explore the nature of the construction of the real, is especially equipped as a site for its investigation and analysis. To quote Marsh directly and so to allow for her own political nuance: "I argue that fiction is an important site for disrupting the ideological naturalization of conventional economics that has successfully diminished the political analysis of the money economy in much cultural discourse" (8).

This central argument is usefully situated according to a reading of the contemporary moment of modernity as one of a collective consciousness haunted by the twin threats or "crises" of environmental and economic apocalypse (the nuclear one supposedly having waned with the lifting of the Iron Curtain). Indeed, this points us towards one of the distinctive features of Marsh's work, which is that she deals with the contemporary head-on. In fact, insofar as her book pre-dates the credit crunch, it is in its expository aspects proleptic of possible socio-economic change. Furthermore, rather than following the rather tired and predictable line of Sassurian linguistics, to simply argue that post-structuralist edict drawing a parallel "between money and language as symbolic systems" (4), Marsh stakes out the turn to an ethical commitment for literary scholars as she seeks to critique "the dominant and dyadic registers of the money economy [...] to make apparent the social relations and forms that follow from, and sustain, this knowledge" (6).

Marsh's book will appeal both to the literary scholar and the economic expert; I passed my copy to a professional friend, a Forensic Accountant ("really enjoyed the read" but "overstates the power of the banks"). Moreover, those interested in feminist theory will find Marsh's reading of "the sexualized languages of growth and expansion" and the "feminization of financial risk" (124) to be illuminating. If there is a limitation to her work it is perhaps that her language, at its most loaded, is also at its least well-defined. I wondered whether, for instance, her reliance on the terms "neo-classicist," "neo-imperialist," and "neo-liberal" was too generalized, whilst the "potent ambivalence" to which she often refers felt a little like Robyn's resort to the Dickensian "'Tis aw a muddle." Then again, I would suggest this review be read as analogous to a game of tennis – the better your opponent, the better you are able to play. Disagreements are but testament to how compelling the analysis and engaging the material.

Although principally concerned with contemporary British literature, chapter one offers a valuable history from the early Edwardian periods "acknowledging the importance of speculation in Edwardian fiction and culture to identifying the re-emergence of this speculative culture [...] with a series of economic and cultural crises that occurred in the late fifties" (12). Transitions in economic history are brought into sharp focus through the literary analysis: from Ian Fleming's 1959 novel *Goldfinger*, where "the national anxiety about currency is played out through the drama of Cold War espionage" (20), to Paul Erdman's *The Billion Dollar Sure Thing* (1973) and Jocelyn Davey's *A Treasury Alarm* (1976), novels "in which the threats posed by the speculative economy became the subject of popular fiction in

the early seventies" (33). Through a close reading of these novels, Marsh exposes the reflective capacity of fiction to expose "money's usurpation of the geo-political powers of the nation-state" (34).

Subsequent chapters follow a fairly regular pattern, surveying a range of texts but focusing in on two or three titles with a sensible balance between necessary plot synopsis, quotation and commentary. Chapter two, for example, "examines the relationship between the changing sexual and military languages for money and the rhetoric of Thatcherism" (41) via a reading of Martin Amis's *Money: A Suicide Note* (1984) and Malcolm Bradbury's *Rates of Exchange* (1983). Chapter three has the enchanting title "Bang, Boom, Bust: The Fortune of the City". In this chapter Marsh examines "the historical tension between industrial and financial capitalism that contributed to the mystification of the latter" as "the self-conscious subject of novels by both Raymond Williams and David Lodge" (74).

It is in the later half of the book, however, that Marsh presents her most provocative and committed work. Chapter four takes as its subject "representations of the rogue trader produced in the financial thrillers that flourished in the aftermath of the Cold War" (100), whilst chapter five considers "the femininization of financial risk" (124) examining how "the militarized and sexualized languages of money become grotesque when mobilized by a female body" (128). Works discussed in this final chapter include Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996), Samantha Phillip's *Blonde Ambition* (1996), as well as novels by Linda Davies.

Beyond the subject matter and choice of texts however, the commitment I am referring to, most evident in these final two chapters, emerges with Marsh's reference to "the responsibilities of knowledge" (87) and the "ethical impulse of the novel" (91). Quite brilliantly bringing together Susan Strange's work on the modern professional and Sidaway and Pryke's analysis of the discourse of emerging markets – where "information and knowledge *collapse-into-promotion*" (in the "postsocial" moment of what I would call a traumatized semiotics – Marsh's work is both compelling and demanding (106). Without wishing to deploy a rhetorical helicopter effect (or qualitative easing), at its best Marsh's work offers a model for a new committed literary criticism, one that is genuinely interdisciplinary (bringing together the latest thinking), engages the contemporary, and is both ethically and politically committed to centring (that is explaining or revealing) the "neo-imperialist networks of the contemporary" (97).

---

**Stan Smith, *Family Fortunes*. Nottingham: Shoestring Press, 2008.**

*Adolphe Haberer*  
*Lyon, France*

---

Stan Smith is of course well-known to readers of *The European English Messenger*. If some of them may have forgotten the single sonnet, "Louis MacNeice in Barcelona, December 1939", published in vol. 15.1 (Spring 2006), all will remember the first publication in full of "Journeys to War" in vol. 17.1 (Spring 2008), an outstanding sequence of 14 sonnets – a

figure which might well be termed, not a baker's, but a sonneteer's dozen. When I first read it, I remember my immediate adhesion to what I regarded as an original and admirable achievement, and my marvelling at both the poet's generosity in giving us his poems and at the adroitness of John Stotesbury (then in charge) in managing such an editorial coup. As I found later there was no great mystery, however, since Stan Smith had played a role in the early years of ESSE's history when, as Chair of the Council for University English, he was the UK national representative on the Board of ESSE.

As a title to that sonnet sequence "Journeys to War" cannot but be taken as a reference to Auden and Isherwood's *Journey to a War* (1939), the leading exemplar of political travel literature in the 1930's, a book written in prose but reaching its poetic culmination with "In Time of War", Auden's concluding sequence of 27 sonnets. This is confirmed by sonnet 6 in Smith's sequence, "Auden and Isherwood in Hankow, March 12 1938", which corresponds precisely to an entry for the same day in their travel diary, namely the day of the *Anschluss*, to the point that their disillusioned remark that "If we are killed on the Yellow River front our deaths will be as provincial and meaningless as a motor-bus accident in Burton-on-Trent" becomes part of Smith's poem as: "To be seen off by a bomb / as pointless and provincial in Hankow / as being run down in Burton by a tram". The cohesiveness of the sequence is not only formally secured by the recurrence of the sonnet form but also by the set configuration of the titles which, with slight variations, always give a poet's name, a place and a date, from "Aeschylus, Gela, Sicily, 456 B.C." to "Robert Lowell dreams the future, Boston, 1968". They are also all monologues, each of the poets voicing in time of war his personal reflections. Even the perforce anonymous After-the-Bomb concluding piece, "End Times: Conversion Poem, Anon, 2006", deviates but little from the established norm, leaving the reader with the task of appreciating the seriousness, or possible tongue-in-cheekiness, of the enunciated certitude that "Tonight we shall be whole in Paradise" and that "at Armageddon we shall be Upraised". A statement now out of date, thank God, by four years.

With Auden, Yeats, MacNeice, Beckett, Keith Douglas and Pound, pride of place is clearly given to modern poets. This is no real surprise since Stan Smith is Research professor in literary studies at Nottingham Trent University, internationally known and respected as a scholar, with an impressive list of publications on modern and contemporary poetry, his most recent books being *The Cambridge Companion to W.H. Auden* (2004), *Irish Poetry and the Construction of Modern Identity* (2005) and *Poetry and Displacement* (2007). To the manifest erudition of the scholar Smith adds the attentiveness of the teacher, and provides the common reader of "Journeys to War" with notes, or "Contexts", which mercifully owe nothing to the eliot-esque tradition of adding puzzlement to obscurity. A good example is the long note relating to a sonnet packed with historical allusions, the one Sir Philip Sidney is made to speak on the day he was mortally wounded at the battle of Zutphen, September 22 1586; the notion that the 108 sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella* were prompted by the poet's ardent love for Penelope Devereux is racily debunked in the opening lines: "I never liked the C\*\*tess. It was just / a convention, literary or political, / something one did".

Though in the published book "Journeys to War" comes after the much longer initial sequence, "Family Fortunes", it was composed first. The evidence for this is given by the



Irish poet Augustus Young who witnessed some of its quite uncommon genesis. He writes: "Three years ago I began to receive a sonnet a week from Stan Smith. I was one of several contacts he chose to test the work on. His round robin circular offered alternative lines and rhymes, and open house. Some sort of consensus was being sought". Later on, apparently maintaining contact with the same network of correspondents, Smith moved on to the writing of the other, more personal, sequence of sonnets. Considering his technical virtuosity and consummate command of the sonnet form, it is quite astonishing that Stan Smith should have waited so long to publish his first book of poems. He may well have a full drawer of secretly hoarded pieces, but all I have found are a couple of witty letters in verse sent to the *London Review of Books* in the early 90's, in style à la Gavin Ewart even more than Audenesque.

"Stan Smith, Extracts from a Diary, Naples to Rome, 1944" stands out as strikingly different among the sonnets of "Journeys to War". The poet's father and namesake (1907-1980) had received "his call-up papers" at the age of 35 and served in the Royal Engineers in North Africa, Italy and Austria. We are informed that he was also an unpublished "pup-tent" poet himself. The whole sequence is dedicated to his memory and he is made by his son to join the company of the greatest with a sonnet that ends sadly with the telegram received in Italy bearing the news of his mother's death, Agnes Thomson (1875-1944), the poet's own grandmother. And here we find ourselves suddenly immersed in what constitutes the subject matter of "Family Fortunes", and invited to deal with that other sonnet sequence which, composed as I understand after "Journeys to War", comes before it in the book and gives the collection its general title. Though each of the 42 sonnets (three times 14!) should be read and savoured for its own sake and the sequence told the way one fingers a string of beads, borne along by rhythm and rhyme, "Family Fortunes" undoubtedly also has a compelling contextual interest. It is *about* the poet's family — "Like dolmens round my childhood, the old people", as John Montague puts it in the chosen epigraph. So far as the subject matter is concerned, the blurb cannot be bettered: "For more than a century and a half, from the 1810's to the 1970's, the Smith family lived in and around the half square mile of School Brow, the original site of Saxon and medieval Warrington, Lancashire [...]. 'Family Fortunes' re-imagines the lives of five generations of this quintessentially English, conservative and Protestant working-class family, its fortunes interwoven with the nation's economic and imperial destiny [...]"

As with "Journeys to War" the sonnet form, in spite of all the technical variations in lay-out and rhyme scheme and the display of the many different types of regular or slant end-rhyme, gives the sequence its formal unity and cohesiveness. Though practically all the sonnets are about a particular member of the family, his or her name is never given in the title but immediately below, in a small-print informative note, often with dates of birth and death and, quite insistently, when available, a precise home address. In some rare cases a much longer note is provided. Stan Smith has of course collected anecdotes that ran in the family, but he has also thoroughly researched the history of old Warrington, checked official records and censuses. The Ordnance map of School Brow in 1893 is inserted so that the addresses mentioned can be located. There is something almost obsessive in the poet's

impassioned attempt at giving every possible detail of time and place and circumstance. This is alleviated by the many photographs reproduced from family albums, showing “the old people” as they were when the author was a child, still young and alive, himself a smiling chubby little boy seen in the company of his grandfather, each picture being at the same time a poignant reminder of the passage of time and of an irretrievable loss. The photographs also bear witness, more generally, to the fact that the development of photography during the 1920’s did a lot to provide working class families with a sense of their own genealogy, something that was once the privilege of the aristocracy with their galleries of family portraits.

Stan Smith’s undertaking in “Family Fortunes” is a labour of filial love and family pieties. It is also immensely varied in tone, each sonnet striking a special note, humorous, tender, crude or thoughtful, and drawing in a specific way on the possibilities of language. In “Hands”, for instance, James Smith, the first to have settled in Warrington at the time when Rylands produced sail-cloth for the Fleet, blesses the memory of Lord Nelson: “He took back Naples after a were born; / when a were seven folk wept and cheered together / for Trafflegár, him dead, but Froggy beat”. At the next generation, James’s son, Isaac, went into fustian-cutting but his business was not his only concern: “A set up shop. / And there our Ikey knocked that daft lass up”. “Our Ikey”, or Ike, was the poet’s grandfather and the lass Agnes, his grandmother, who tells her side of the story: “I was five months gone before they knew. / We had to wed before New Year so my / bairn’s birth looked decent in the register”. Agnes, barely literate, who once exclaimed ““Ee, but they ‘ave some fun on these boats””, having misread the headline in the newspaper: ““Picnic on board ship”” when the word was “panic” and the ship could well have been the Titanic. Ike, “small and wiry with / a big nose”, who was to start a hardware shop in the 1920’s with the “lump sum” he had made producing poison gas during the war “at Warrington gasworks where he worked as foreman.” Ike and Agnes play a major part in “Family Fortunes”. They raised a large family, which induces a gibe at Virginia Woolf: “A room of her own, five hundred pounds a year: / a modest expectation. Ike and Agnes / brought up seven kids in four rooms and a kitchen, / cold water only, shared privies down the yard”. Their first-born son was Arthur, nicknamed Wire, “built like a brick shithouse, / near enough square, as broad as he was high”, who worked all his life for Rylands, and disappointingly for his father remained a bachelor. It therefore fell to Stanley, or Stan, their second and only other boy, to secure descent through the male line – an essential safeguard against the dark backward and abysm of time for an old man “fearing engulfment of the name of Smith”. Which descent was provided when *our* Stan Smith, called Stanley after his father, was born in January 1943. Between father and son, to say nothing of mother and son, there clearly existed a strong affective relationship. The father was a staunch Tory, regretting Winston Churchill, the “blue-blood leader seeing off the foe”, finding that “Maggie struck the true-blue Tory note”, responsive in the 1970’s to Enoch Powell’s views on immigration (“my decent father voted National Front”). But in “True” a great intensity of *true* feeling and love can be read between lines that Heaney could well have written, had his own father run a bike-shop:

When I was ten he taught me to true a wheel.  
I loved the silent concentration as,

tightening or slackening with the nipple-key,  
he'd spin the wobbling rim between the forks,  
hunched patient on his father's homemade stool,  
from which his great-grand-daughter now serves tea.

There is much that I would wish to add to do full justice to *Family Fortunes* — something about “So Much Depends”, the third minimal sequence of one remarkable sonnet only, so far unmentioned by me — but I will now conclude with two questions that do not bear on the *what* or the *how* but on the *why* of this fine book. Firstly, why sonnets? And secondly, why two distinct sonnet sequences? And I won't be content with simple answers like “Stan Smith liked sonnets” and “One sequence was not enough to make a publishable book”, though both are likely to be true.

A sonnet is a short poem. Even before it is read it can be seen as a recognizable poetic form on the page. Like a photograph it is seen as a whole. And it aims at the instantaneity of the photograph, at being “a moment's monument” (Rossetti), “a small eternity” (MacNeice), free from the flight of time. It best corresponds to Dylan Thomas's conception of the poem as “a formally watertight compartment of words”. It is a sort of verbal cage, but what it tries to cage is impossible, the compartment leaks and time irremediably continues to tick away. With the concentrated form of the sonnet we are made to experience in its intensity what poetry is about: possibly with music, poetry is the only art that can, beyond language and through language, make what T.S. Eliot calls “a raid upon the inarticulate”, not into the dark night of the mystics but into the unattainable and mysterious region and time of early childhood when, branching out of the family tree, *soma* and *sema* were first bound together. This accounts for the fact that sonnets tend to come in sequences, each failure generating a new attempt. Which also perhaps accounts for the extraordinary and unique longevity of a form which is said to have originated in the tradition of *fin' amor* and the *canço* of the troubadours, to have first appeared in the 13<sup>th</sup> century at the court of the king of Sicily, and to have then spread from Italy across Europe at the Renaissance. The sonnet sequence, combining fragmentation and continuity, was undoubtedly most suitable to Stan Smith's celebratory purpose, both in “Journeys to War” and in “Family Fortunes”. But more importantly, by choosing the sonnet form, Stan Smith joined the ranks of a legion of poets that have composed sonnets before him — from Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare to Herbert, Donne and Milton, to Wordsworth and Keats, to Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Swinburne and Hopkins, and nearer to us Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Auden, Spender, Dylan Thomas, Roy (and John) Fuller, Robert Frost, Lowell, Tony Harrison, Geoffrey Hill, Heaney and Muldoon, to name but a few. Stan Smith is now a member of the great family of poets, not by chance but by choice.

Jean Cocteau once declared: “A bird never sings so well as when it sings in its family tree” (my translation). This bold pronouncement is of course meant to be true of the poet, and I think that it can fittingly be substantiated by *Family Fortunes*. And this will lead me to answer tentatively my second question: why two distinct sonnet sequences? I believe there are two sonnet sequences because the poet has his place and sings in two distinct family trees. The first one he was born into, for better for worse, by chance, by an act of fortune

which became part of the family fortunes of the Smiths of Warrington. But that tree is not a tree he can stand outside of, it is part and constitutive of himself, the line of descent is also a blood line and from it he has drawn “that fragile scarlet tree we carry within us” (Osbert Sitwell). The second tree is that of the family of poets and sonneteers which Stan Smith joined by an act of will when he wrote “Journeys to War”. With him, the branches of the two trees are now intertwined and to pursue the metaphor Smith’s book of sonnets results from some sort of cross-fertilization. His father was an amateur poet — “soldier, poet, shopkeeper, he / As ‘twere all life’s epitome” — who set an example to his son and probably showed him how to *true* a line of verse, and his son gave him a place among the poets he celebrates. And quite amusingly, in “Centenary Celebrations”, Stan Smith writes a joint *In memoriam* for W.H. Auden and his own mother, Edith Smith, both born on February 21, 1907 — “two souls with nothing in common, never joined /in the history of the world, except by me”.

In the “Introductory Rhymes” to his new book of poems, *Responsibilities* (1914), W.B. Yeats addresses his “old fathers” and begs their pardon for having failed to further the family’s line of descent. He concludes: “I have no child, I have nothing but a book, / Nothing but that to prove your blood and mine”. Not so Stan Smith who has no need for pardon from either of his two sets of “old fathers”: he has produced a son and a grandson (discreetly mentioned in a note) and a fine book of sonnets. His place in the two family trees is ensured, in spite of his concluding “Envoi: Throwaway Lines”, lines written in dejection, in anticipation of his own death and of the death of our planet. And in spite of the gloomy postscript borrowed from Ezra Pound: “As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill / from the wreckage of Europe, ego scriptor....”

---

**Inmaculada Fortanet-Gómez and Christine A. Räisänen (eds), *ESP in European Higher Education: Integrating Language and Content*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008. 285 pages, €99, ISBN 978-90-272-0520-9.**

*Ute Smit*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

---

Internationalization of education, increased student mobility, and the Bologna process — besides their implications for university policies in mainland Europe, these buzz words have brought about a rising need for English for specific purposes (ESP), learnt to be used for various ends within an ever diversifying range of disciplines. Correspondingly, university-based ESP has been researched by diverse stakeholders, i.e. language teachers, course developers and applied linguistic researchers, and from various perspectives, such as language teaching pedagogy or classroom discourse (e.g. Swales and Feak 2004; Wilkinson and Zegers 2007). As is so often the case, the exchange between these groups and their research concerns still needs to be intensified. An important step in this direction is to provide possibilities for such an exchange, which is what the volume under review has been designed to do and, to put this up front, also fully achieves. Thanks to a well chosen range of contributions and a detailed overview chapter on ESP teaching and learning at European

universities, this book offers the reader a timely overview of the range of concerns and considerations relevant to teaching and using ESP within European higher education at the present time of fundamental changes instigated by the politically motivated harmonization endeavours, usually referred to as the Bologna process.

As the wide angle that the volume takes on ESP might come somewhat unexpectedly, the reader is well advised to read the truly informative introductory pages before turning to any of the content chapters. In the Introduction, the editors stress the comprehensive nature of their view on ESP and lay out the aims and nature of their “collection of empirical experiences and reflections on the theories and practices of ESP pedagogy” (p. 2). The brief summaries of chapters that follow take the diversity of research interests on board in that they do not only sketch the respective contributions, but also indicate for whom they might be particularly interesting, thus taking cognizance of the breadth of the volume and its envisaged readership.

As this review is meant to give an evaluative account of *ESP in European Higher Education* as a collected volume rather than an amalgamation of academic articles, I will not follow a chapter-by-chapter approach; instead, I will focus on the four parts of the volume, introduced by the editors to bundle the contributions according to different topic areas. Part I on “ESP/EAP in Western Europe post-Bologna” consists of a single, but duly substantial contribution, in which Räisänen and Fortanet-Gómez provide an informative overview of European higher education (language) policies as well as more specific insights into the differences between countries and educational systems. While it could have been informed more explicitly by the up-to-date language policy literature (e.g. Shohamy 2006), the insightful discussion relies on official documents as well as a questionnaire-cum-interview survey. Somewhat deplorably, the latter is not used to its full potential as, to draw on Spolsky’s (2004) model of language policy, the authors prioritise “language management” over the two other levels of language policy, i.e. “language ideology” and “language practice”. Overall, Part I is definitely very helpful to all readers in that it offers a comprehensive overview of European (language) policies in higher education in its diversification, thus functioning as the informative backdrop, against which to read and interpret the following contributions.

Part II, fittingly entitled “theoretical and educational approaches to the teaching and learning of ESP/EAP”, contains four thoroughly researched contributions from three countries: the Netherlands (Wilkinson; Lankamp), France (Dressen-Hammouda) and Sweden (Eriksson and Gustafsson). Each offers an enlightening discussion of one or two cases of ESP teaching and learning that reflect the local needs and aims and, at the same time, have acted as catalysts in first applying and then refining a specific theoretically-informed pedagogical approach. At stake are ESP-informed problem-based learning (Wilkinson); the cultural embeddedness of process-oriented and genre-based methodologies (Dressen-Hammouda); a genre-based online thesis-writing course (Lankamp); and a writing-to-learn methodology aiming for transferability (Eriksson and Gustafsson). While these chapters deal with fundamentally different teaching scenarios and theoretically informed

methodologies, they complement each other successfully by carefully arguing their case of ESP in higher education and the strengths and weaknesses of the respective methodology.

Such harmony in diversity is less apparent in Part III. Already its title, “Integrating content and language (national adaptations)”, is somewhat less enlightening of what is to follow. The six contributions deal with relatively specific cases of ESP teaching, which differ in terms of the amount and degree of integration of content and language. The first case is the arguably most integrated one of an English-medium MA programme in Spain (Ruiz-Garrido and Palmer-Silveira), while the other chapters focus on ESP courses for business purposes in the Netherlands (Planken and Nickerson) and in Finland (Gattoni), on ESP courses for political sciences in Italy (Solly), for marine engineering in Spain (Bocanegra-Valle) and for environmental engineering in Germany (Krausse). Furthermore, the chapters reveal differences in terms of theoretical embedding. While Ruiz-Garrido and Palmer-Silveira place their case study in European language policies at the macro level, Solly argues for a “distinctive approach” (p. 199) of genre-based ESP learning and Krausse foregrounds lexical and collocational learning as central to ESP teaching. The remaining three chapters (Planken and Nickerson; Gattoni; Bocanegra-Valle), on the other hand, contain hands-on descriptions of good ESP practice, sidelining theoretical discussions to a minimum. While the resulting disparity of argumentative focus and practical/theoretical weighting makes this part less coherent, it should be stressed that all articles offer “empirical [ESP pedagogical] experiences and practices” (p.2), thus contributing to the overall aim of the volume.

By way of conclusion, the final two chapters are pulled together as Part IV, “English as the medium of teaching and communication: Courses for staff”. While this heading is somewhat misleading – the focus is on curricula of language teaching units rather than only on staff-focussed courses – the two contributions are superbly placed as they conclude the volume in more than one way. Firstly, both give broader accounts of tertiary-level language teaching: Räsänen describes the (action-)research informed ongoing pedagogical developments at the Language Centre of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland and a Swedish team, consisting of Benson, Brunsberg, Duhs, Minugh and Shaw, report on ESP curriculum developments at Stockholm University and the Stockholm Royal Institute of Technology. Secondly, both chapters explicitly combine theoretical and practical pedagogical considerations, thus allowing the readers to draw connections to the preceding parts. Finally, Part IV is a worthy conclusion in that its contributions address the whole potential readership of this generally successful volume: ESP teachers, language course developers as well as applied linguistic researchers interested in *Integrating Content and Language in ESP in Higher Education* in Western Europe and, as it is rightly hoped, also elsewhere.

### **References**

- Shohamy, Elana 2006. *Language Policy: Hidden Agendas and New Approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Spolsky, Bernard 2004. *Language Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Swales, John / Feak, Christine B. 2007. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Wilkinson, Robert / Zegers, Vera (eds) 2007. *Researching Content and Language Integration in Higher Education*. Maastricht University Language Centre.

**Daniel Schreier, Peter Trudgill, Edgar W. Schneider and Jeffrey P. Williams (eds), *The Lesser-Known Varieties of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. £19.99 (paperback), ISBN-13: 9780521710169.**

*Raymond Hickey*

*University of Duisburg and Essen, Campus Essen, Germany*

---

The concern of this timely and thought-provoking volume is the lesser-known varieties of English (LKVEs) spoken at various locations in the anglophone world. It has been put together by four scholars who all share international reputations in the field of variety studies and hence their qualifications for undertaking the present task are beyond any doubt. I suppose that a reader taking this book in hand might ask two basic questions: (i) why have the editors chosen the set of LKVEs which they did and (ii) are there any special linguistic insights to be gained from examining these varieties rather than others in the arena of present-day Englishes.

The editors are certainly aware of these issues, clearly at the documentary level where it is obvious that some varieties are much better documented in the scholarly literature than others (African American English and New Zealand English are cited as examples). They state in their introduction that “[our] book is therefore an effort to somewhat redress the existing imbalance. We exclusively focus on varieties that have received less or no interest in the canon of English as a world language and give a long-overdue platform to those who have never made it centre stage” (p. 3). This is a laudable objective and also one which automatically set this reviewer wondering why the particular set of varieties was chosen.

To find an answer to this question, I looked at the eight characteristics for LKVEs which the editors list in their introduction. The essential characteristics are that the LKVEs are stable first language varieties with a clearly identifiable profile and that “they are typically spoken by minorities” (p. 4). Importantly, the editors also specify that “[many] of them were originally transmitted by settler communities or adopted by newly-formed social communities that emerged early in the colonial era, so that they substantially derive from British inputs” and furthermore that “[they] were formed by processes of dialect and/or language contact (which makes it impossible to ascribe them genetic status, e.g. creoles or koinés...)” (p. 4).

The latter criteria help to explain why many LKVEs were not included in this volume. If smallish speaker numbers and lack of linguistic documentation were the primary criteria for inclusion, then virtually every variety of English in the Pacific, except perhaps English in Hawaii, would meet the criteria just mentioned (population size and relative documentation). So “settler English” status would appear to have been the key criterion, a perfectly valid one it should be said. On this basis, the editors could nonetheless have included varieties such as Anglo-Indian English or English in Gibraltar and English in Malta from the European area or Barbadian English from the Caribbean, and could have discussed the relationship of dialect input to pidgin and creolisation processes in the latter context.

With regard to relative documentation some readers might wonder why Newfoundland English was included as there is quite a body of literature on English in this part of Canada. If Newfoundland English made it in, one might ask, why were other comparable varieties not included, such as Ozark English, Appalachian English or Ocracoke English from the United States. However, it would be petty-minded to criticise the editors on these grounds and I take it that much more mundane factors played a role here, such as the availability of scholars to supply contributions.

Focussing on the second question posed in the first paragraph above, the issue of linguistic insights, one sees that that editors are indeed aware of the potential value of LKVEs in this respect: "Our viewpoint is that studying lesser-known varieties (of English for the present purpose, but of other languages also) is essential for gaining a more concise understanding of the mechanisms that underlie sociolinguistic diversification as well as principles of language birth and death, i.e. questions that loom large in the existing research body on English as a world language" (p. 3). It is in the light of this stance that the individual contributions to the volume were assessed.

- *The British Isles*

*Orkney and Shetland* (Gunnel Melchers and Peter Sundkvist), *Channel Islands* (Mari C. Jones). For the British Isles the topic of language contact looms large. In their treatment of English on the northern Scottish islands of Orkney and Shetland the authors Melchers and Sundkvist offer an authoritative account of language development there with special emphasis on the interface between English and Scanadivian down through the centuries. For the Channel Islands Jones provides a concise summary of the phonology and grammar of English at this location, a variety which arose through intensive contact with Normandy French. Her remarks on grammar encompass features of bilingual individuals showing the structural influence of French on English.

- *The Americas and the Caribbean*

*Canadian Maritime English* (Michael Kieft and Elizabeth Kay-Raining Bird), *Newfoundland and Labrador English* (Sandra Clarke). English on the eastern coast of Canada is the topic of the contributions by Kieft and Elizabeth Kay-Raining Bird as well as Clarke. All the authors consider the dialect input to the region, a mixture of English and Irish inputs with small amounts from Scotland. Newfoundland is an older anglophone settlement than the rest of the east coast and more clearly shows the interaction of major dialect inputs, in this case from the south-west of England and the south-east of Ireland respectively.

*Honduras/Bay Islands English* (Ross Graham), *Euro-Caribbean English varieties* (Jeffrey P. Williams), *Bahamian English* (Jeffrey Reaser), *Dominican Kokoy* (Michael Aceto). Three types of Caribbean English, which are not classified as creoles or which did not have creole origins, are considered here. The Turks and Caicos, as islands with a largely English dialect background, could have been considered here, but the chapter on Bahamian English is sufficient, given the close historical and settlement ties between these islands and the Bahamas. The most detailed chapter in this section is that on Honduras/Bay Islands English which provides much sociolinguistic information on the background of English there and a thorough lexical-set based analysis of phonology as well as a comprehensive discussion of nonstandard grammatical features most of which can be traced to British dialect input. The



chapter on *Anglo-Argentine English* (Julian Jefferies) is especially interesting as it deals with an anglophone diaspora in a Spanish context, something which is only known from the now extinct English community on Samaná peninsula in the Dominican Republic and (partially) from English in Gibraltar.

- *The South Atlantic Ocean*

*Falkland Islands English* (David Britain and Andrea Sudbury), *St Helenian English* (Daniel Schreier), *Tristan da Cunha English* (Daniel Schreier). The contributions for this section are all by scholars well known for their work in this area. Articles on the Falklands have been written by Andrea Sudbury before and there are monographs on St Helena and Tristan da Cunha by Daniel Schreier. Nonetheless, it is useful to have these summaries within this volume as they match the other contributions thematically.

- *Africa*

*L1 Rhodesian English* (Susan Fitzmaurice), *White Kenyan English* (Thomas Hoffmann) The two chapters here are among the most original in the book, given that their topics have not really been dealt with before, although South African English has been well researched and East African English has already been covered by scholars such as Josef Schmied. In both cases there is background information and a discussion of why these varieties are worthy of linguistic study. Detailed phonetic treatments are then offered in each chapter.

- *Australia and the Pacific*

*Euroasian Singapore English* (Lionel Wee), *Peranakan English in Singapore* (Lisa Lim), *Norfolk and Pitcairn varieties* (Peter Mühlhäusler) Two of the chapters here keep to the stipulation of British descent, at least along the line of one parent (as with the Euroasians) which is a guiding principle of this volume. However, the Peranakans are the descendants of southern Chinese traders in the former British Straits Settlements of Malaya. Despite this thematic break with the rest of the volume, the chapter by Lim provides much relevant information on this LKVE as does the chapter on Euroasian Singapore English by Wee. Mühlhäusler's review of English on Norfolk and Pitcairn is, like that in the section on the South Atlantic, a summary of information which the author has provided elsewhere

Summing up one can say that the present volume is a valuable addition to the literature on varieties of English. It brings many smaller varieties to the fore and highlights our awareness of their existence and their value in the linguistic analysis of the processes of dialect birth and development, especially in the context of speaker contact and mixed input from the British Isles during the colonial era.

---

**Geoffrey Leech, Marianne Hundt, Christian Mair and Nicholas Smith (eds), *Change in Contemporary English: A Grammatical Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. £65.00 (hardback), ISBN-13: 9780521867221.**

*Raymond Hickey*  
*University of Duisburg and Essen, Campus Essen, Germany*

---

Not surprisingly, this book opens with a justification for its appearance at the present. The

authors begin by considering “grammatical blindness”, the lack of awareness on the part of both lay speakers and scholars of changes which are currently in progress in English. This introduction sets the scene for the remainder of the book in which the four authors look at a number of grammatical features of present-day English (from the two major blocks of the anglophone world, America and the British Isles). The methods used to determine the nature and course of the changes they identify are discussed in detail, particularly in Chapter 2, “Comparative corpus linguistics: The methodological basis of this book”. The outset is provided by the Brown Corpus, the original one-million word corpus of American English, compiled in by scholars working in Rhode Island and published in 1961. This is followed by three further corpora, the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen corpus, the Freiburg-Brown corpus and the Freiburg-Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen corpus which followed in the ensuing three decades (down to 1991). The value of their corpus investigation is that by the use of two sets of parallel corpora the authors have been able to document clearly the gradual shift in grammatical usage and categorisation which has been under way in the second half of the twentieth century on both sides of the Atlantic. It is the invisibility of these changes at close range which provides the primary justification for the corpus analysis given in this book, an analysis which the authors rightly point out is within a mainstream paradigm of present-day linguistics.

Having cleared the ground for the examination of a number of phenomena which the authors wish to highlight they proceed with a detailed investigation in which these phenomena are grouped into the following chapters:

3. The subjunctive mood
4. The modal auxiliaries
5. The so-called semi-modals
6. The progressive
7. The passive voice
8. Expanded predicates in British and American English
9. Non-finite clauses
10. The noun phrase

The chapter on the subjunctive mood looks at the development of this category in both British and American English and on the demise and revival, especially in British English (p. 58), of the mandative subjunctive (as in *She insists that he come tonight*). On the other hand, the *were* subjunctive is also considered and is largely deemed to be a recessive formal option (p. 66).

The chapter on the modal auxiliaries is concerned with the apparent decline of the true modals in current English. This issue is certainly related to genre and to the spoken-written dichotomy. There is also a cline among modals with *shall*, *ought to* and *need(n't)* at the bottom of the frequency scale (p. 80). If the true modals are shrinking in their usage then there is a corresponding expansion in the use of semi-modals, the topic of the next chapter. This is particularly apparent in the use of *have to* as a replacement for (deontic) *must* (p. 97). The question of phonetic reduction and grammaticalisation is an issue which is taken up by the authors in this context, see Section 5.3.

Chapter 6 deals with the spread of the progressive to contexts in which it was hitherto not found, e.g. with stative verbs. There are differences here between British and American English as the authors point out (p. 124) and the distribution of the progressive by genre shows a cline of usage.

The expansion of the *get* passive at the expense of *be* passives is the topic of Chapter 7. There is a clear decline of the *be* passive as documented in the parallel corpora (p. 149) and this is reflected in a corresponding increase in the *get* passive, especially in adversative contexts (p. 157). The authors also consider the development of the medio-passive (p. 158ff.) as in *Organic food sells well nowadays* and note its use for adjectives in *-able*, e.g. *The buckles adjust easily* for *The buckles are easily adjustable*.

The remaining chapters look at other cases of variation, especially in the contrast of British and American English, e.g. in the use of *take* and *have* as expanded predicates (p. 176f.), e.g. *Have / take a look at the car*. Another case, which shows a long diachronic development, is that of non-finite clauses where gerundial clauses have been gaining ground over both finite and infinitival clauses (p. 204).

The final data-centred chapter is that on noun phrases which looks at a number of aspects, such as the relationship of *of*-genitives to *s*-genitives (p. 222ff.). Chapter 11, "Linguistic and other determinants of change", is particularly appropriate and considers the various internal and external factors which may play a role in the neglect of or preference for a particular syntactic feature in present-day English.

The subtitle of this book, and the first paragraph of the preface, defines the limits of its subject matter, e.g. there is nothing about the many changes in the lexicon of present-day British or American English. But the interface with other levels of language are matters which have to do with grammatical change and certainly one of the most important for current English is the great increase in noun to verb conversion, as in *to mailshot the electorate*, *to ring-fence the funding of arms*, *the way we holiday in future*. Other features would be the use of phrasal verbs as adjectives, both attributive and predicative, as in *It's a must-have item*, *It was such a put-down*, *a get-out clause*, *joined-up thinking*, often in elliptical form, e.g. *a separated father*, *a gated community*, *recepted childminders*. Shifts to direct object, e.g. *to report (to) X*, *to appeal (against) X*, *to protest (about) X* and changes in subcategorisation are also among the syntactic changes in present-day English, e.g. a shift in animacy with subjects as in *This door is alarmed*.

Summing up, one can say that the current book is a stimulating treatment of items of syntactic change which are discernible at the present. It is well compiled and presented and the authors have taken great care to backup all their statements with statistics from their corpora, adding authority to the conclusions they reach. It should be emphasised that none of the above phenomena represent categorical changes in the grammar of present-day English. Rather they are alterations in range and usage. The authors use the labels "losing ground" and "gaining ground" to classify these changes in usage. Examples along the recessive – emergent axis would be the following (p. 48):

<i>recessive</i>	<i>emergent</i>
modal auxiliaries	semi-modals

*be*-passives                      *get*-passives  
*of*-phrases                        *s*-genitives  
*wh*-relativisation                *that* or zero relativisation

These changes do, however, represent possible trajectories for major change in the future if the pathways which are now recognisable are continued and expanded in the future and if the changes become categorical. Furthermore, the insights gained from this kind of preference for alternative structures can aid linguists in the interpretation of established cases of grammatical change in the history of English.

---

## CALL FOR PAPERS: Novelties and Reminders

---

Please note that this section includes only a small selection of the numerous CFPs listed in the ESSE website. Here, precedence is normally given to announcements whose deadline is approaching, but **in the website there is a much larger number of CFPs**, which also includes those received since the newsletter went to press and those for events whose deadline for submissions has expired, but which readers might be interested in attending anyway.

We also recommend that, before contacting the editors or the organizers, you **read the full text of the CFP in the website**, as this contains very important information on the specific topics envisaged for the journal or the conference, in addition to useful submission guidelines, full contact details and the URL of the event where applicable. For *EJES* see pp. 15-17 in this issue.

More extensive information is provided at [www.essenglish.org/calls.html](http://www.essenglish.org/calls.html)

You can view the list of the 15 most recently published **ESSE calls for papers on your Smartphone (iPhone et al.)** and be alerted every time a new CFP is posted on the ESSE website. **How?**  
a) download an RSS reader (several of them are available as free applications), and  
b) enter the URL of the ESSE RSS feed: [www.essenglish.org/calls.xml](http://www.essenglish.org/calls.xml)

---

## ARTICLES and ESSAYS

---

**Formal and Thematic Innovation** *Journal of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies*, issue 6. Deadline for proposals: 30 November 2010. Contact [ameliamolea@yahoo.com](mailto:ameliamolea@yahoo.com) or [magdamihailescu@gmail.com](mailto:magdamihailescu@gmail.com)

**Narrative practices and Anglo-Saxon documentary film-making: from propaganda to dissent** *LISA e-journal*. Deadline for proposals: 1 December 2010. Contact Delphine Letort

[Delphine.Letort@univ-lemans.fr](mailto:Delphine.Letort@univ-lemans.fr) and to Georges Fournier [gr.fournier@wanadoo.fr](mailto:gr.fournier@wanadoo.fr)

**Studies on the Post-scriptum** Deadline for proposals: 15 December 2010.

Contact Isabelle Schmitt: [Isabelle.Schmitt@u-bourgogne.fr](mailto:Isabelle.Schmitt@u-bourgogne.fr)

**Spectacles and Things: Visual and Material Culture and/in Neo-Victorianism**

Special issue of *Neo-Victorian Studies*. Deadline for proposals: 30 December 2010.

Contact the guest editors [nadine.boehm@angl.phil.uni-erlangen.de](mailto:nadine.boehm@angl.phil.uni-erlangen.de) and [susanne.gruss@angl.phil.uni-erlangen.de](mailto:susanne.gruss@angl.phil.uni-erlangen.de) and the General Editor Marie-Luise Kohlke [neovictorianstudies@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:neovictorianstudies@swansea.ac.uk)

**Female Aestheticism** Special Oct. 2011 issue of *Cahiers Victoriens et Edouardiens*.

Deadline for proposals: 31 December 2010. Contact [catherine.delyfer@univ-montp3.fr](mailto:catherine.delyfer@univ-montp3.fr)

**Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792)**

Deadline for proposals: 31 December 2010. Contact Enit K. Steiner [enit.steiner@es.uzh.ch](mailto:enit.steiner@es.uzh.ch)