

Nor do they help me as I try to justify asking the Spanish Government for a little more money to help me tend my little plot of English Literary Studies. Yet, as Nussbaum concludes, academics “owe the public a broad and sustained account of what they do and why” (2011: 29). As a lecturer and researcher of English Literature based in Spain, I’m afraid I cannot offer my public any such account. Our colleagues in the UK may still, at a pinch, talk about preserving the national cultural tradition; and colleagues at the most privileged and/or privately funded institutions may still be able to invoke that “training of the mind” so jealously arrogated by Classical Studies and revamped (I suppose) as the post-Bologna competence of “critical thinking” that we stick into our course guides to fill them out a bit. But how can I and other English literary academics based on the wrong side of the English Channel justify our continued sponging off cash-strapped states? If you can’t help me out with the Second Law of Dynamics, at least a few answers to that question would be welcome. And if none can be found, then “God Bless Us, Every One!”

#### References

- Bate, Jonathan 2011. Finding Public Value. *Oxford Today* 24.1 (Michaelmas Term): 30-31.  
Blakemore, Colin 2011. Fearful Asymmetry. *Oxford Today* 24.1 (Michaelmas Term): 32-3.  
Dickens, Charles 1971. *Bleak House*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.  
Dickens, Charles 1985. *Little Dorrit*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.  
Nussbaum, Marta 2011. “Not for Profit”. A conversation with Richard Lofthouse. *Oxford Today* 24.1 (Michaelmas Term): 28-9.  
Shelston, Alan (ed.) 1985. *Dickens: Dombey and Son and Little Dorrit. A Casebook*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.  
Snow, C. P. 1959. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: CUP.  
Uglow, Jenny 2002. *The Lunar Men. The Friends Who Made the Future 1730-1810*. London: Faber.  
Vianu, Lidia 2011. Review of C. George Sandulescu, *The Joycean Monologue*. *The European English Messenger* 20.2 (Autumn): 75-79.

---

## Reports and Reviews

---

### *Ethical Debates in Contemporary Theatre and Drama*

20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE), Mainz, 2-5 June 2011

*Christoph Henke*  
*University of Augsburg, Germany*

---

The renewed interest in the ethical dimension of art and performance has been a much discussed phenomenon for quite some time. This is reflected in numerous publications, conferences and special issues of scholarly journals across a wide range of academic fields. Drama and theatre studies are no exception here, which is not surprising since the very word *drama* itself means action, which implies ethical decisions. It was therefore most fitting to make ethics the topic of the 20<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE) in Mainz, which was co-hosted by Bernhard Reitz, Mark

Berninger and Friedemann Kreuder (all of the University of Mainz). The conference proved to be a forum for diverse approaches to and lively discussions of the ethical dimension of contemporary drama in Britain, North America and elsewhere.

The opening keynote speech was given by playwright and academic **Dan Rebellato** (Royal Holloway, University of London), who looked at the ethics of so-called two-handers in his talk "Two: Duologues, Differends and Ethical Dilemmas". Addressing a large number of plays from the 1990s (such as David Mamet's *Oleanna*, Sarah Kane's *Blasted*, Jim Cartwright's *I Licked a Slag's Deodorant*) and the 2000s (Martin Crimp's *The Country*, Caryl Churchill's *A Number*) as well as recent two-handers by Dennis Kelly, Lucy Kirkwood and Simon Stephens, Rebellato argued that two-character plays are the visible sign of a return of ethics in non-universalist terms, as envisaged in Jean-François Lyotard's postmodern ethic of the "differend". The resurgence of ethics in philosophical writings by Jacques Derrida, Alain Badiou and Giorgio Agamben is mirrored by a meta-ethical interest of playwrights in asking questions about individuality and responsibility vis-à-vis the unleashed power of capitalism in Western societies after 1990 without resorting to universalist stances.

The three papers of the conference's first panel were concerned with the representation of war and international conflict in contemporary drama. **Franziska Quabeck** (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster) discussed Gregory Burke's plays *The Straits* (2003) and *Black Watch* (2006) in the light of Michael Walzer's just war theory and showed how the plays do not focus on the politics of either the Falklands or Iraq war, but on the ethics of war as reflected in a juxtaposition with personal conflict (*The Straits*) and a contrast between political decisions and individual consequences (*Black Watch*). The documentary aspect of representing war in Emily Mann's older Vietnam play *Still Life* (1980) and Heather Raffo's more recent Iraq piece *9 Parts of Desire* (2003) was examined by **Ilka Saal** (University of Erfurt), who determined the contrast between Mann's and Raffo's approaches as that between an attempt at authenticity and an emphasis of theatricality. Finally, **Enric Monforte** (University of Barcelona) looked at the different aesthetic ways of representing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in David Hare's *Via Dolorosa* (1998), Robin Soan's *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook* (2004) and Caryl Churchill's *Seven Jewish Children* (2009). Contrary to Hare's personal authorial approach and Soan's clearly humanitarian intentions, Churchill's unconventional form offers space for ethical considerations by provoking the reader/audience into creating meaning from the gaps of defamiliarized drama.

In the following panel, war and witnessing continued to feature as important themes of critical ethical reflection in contemporary drama. **Christiane Schlote** (University of Zurich) gave an overview of "A Different Theatre of War" (thus the title of her talk) by addressing recent representations of humanitarian aid on the British stage in plays such as Richard Bean's *On the Side of Angels*, Stella Feehily's *Think Global, Fuck Local*, Colin Teevan's *The Lion of Kabul* and Stephen Todd's *The Remnants of Once Fine Girls* (all 2009). The often farcical figure of the international aid worker in those plays problematizes the ambiguous effects of humanitarian aid as well as, implicitly at least, theatrical practices of political intervention. The ethics of witnessing in a globalized space was the focus of **Mireia Aragay's** (University of Barcelona) paper, in which she looked at Harold Pinter's *Party Time* (1991), Caryl Churchill's *Far Away* (2000) and Martin Crimp's *Fewer Emergencies* (2005). Through experimental forms these plays put spectators in the position of active witnesses of global interrelatedness, while they remind us at the same time of the vast economic/cultural contrasts between a privileged minority and an underprivileged majority.

The second day of the conference was concluded by playwright and radio/screenplay writer **Rosa Munro**, whose keynote lecture on “One Writer’s Ongoing Struggle to Write Entertaining Narratives with Honest Politics” gave a personal insight into the ethical choices of a writer struggling to mediate between her own core beliefs and the expectations of heterogeneous audiences, in order to entertain the latter without compromising the former. With the example of her 1991 play *Bold Girls* about the female experience of the wives or partners of soldiers in Northern Ireland’s republican fight, Munro made clear her moral responsibility to capture human experience against taboos of political correctness.

In the morning panel of the next conference day, three papers turned to theatrical representations of the ethics of fringe communities, either in contrast to mainstream society or within the transnational context of global capitalism. **Dirk Visser** (University of Groningen) talked about radical gay theatre and what he called the “ethics of AIDS”, especially with reference to John Roman Baker’s “AIDS Positive Underground Theatre”, a company founded in the early 1990s, which uses the theatre as a radical space/mode of action beyond the dichotomy of assimilating into a society of capitalist consumption or earlier gay liberationism. A different form of opposition to mainstream culture is frequently performed by two American political theatre collectives, the women peace activists group “Code Pink” and Bill Talen’s “Reverend Billy and the Life After Shopping”, which were discussed by **Pia Wiegink** (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz) in her paper entitled “actEthics”. Wiegink showed how these two groups seek to undermine nationalist discourses of homeland security in the aftermath of 9/11 by not representing, but *performing* ethical acts in themselves. **Ondřej Pilný** (Charles University, Prague) concluded the panel by analyzing the responses to the “terminal days of the Celtic Tiger” in most recent Irish drama, i.e. Marina Carr’s *Marble* (2009), Tom Murphy’s *The Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant* (2009) and Enda Walsh’s *Penelope* (2010). In very different forms and more or less direct ways, these plays all comment critically on the recent collapse of the Irish economy after its soaring in the early 2000s.

In the third keynote speech of the conference, playwright, screenwriter and political satirist **Alistair Beaton** revealed, in conversation with Michael Raab, his approach to political satire on the stage and in his productions for television. As comedy is only successful when it has the same basis in truth as serious drama, Beaton made it clear that laughter does not cheapen an important message to be delivered by the satirist. In other words, his concept of satire embraces entertainment rather than didactic lecturing, which he has proven in such plays as *Feelgood* (2001), *Follow My Leader* (2004) and *King of Hearts* (2007) as well as in his TV productions, most notably Channel 4’s *The Trial of Tony Blair* (2007).

The ethics of self with its shaping by external influence and manipulative acts of autobiographical memory was the focus of the next panel on contemporary American and Canadian drama. **Barbara Antoniazzi** (Freie Universität, Berlin) analyzed Paula Vogel’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play on paedophilia, *How I Learned to Drive* (1997), with regard to its presentation of a form of speculative ethics that question dogmatic understandings of moral universalism. The puppet play *Billy Twinkle: Requiem for a Golden Boy* (2008) by Canadian artist Ronnie Burkett featured in **Michael Bachmann**’s (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz) paper on autobiographical performance and the ethics of memory. By presenting mirror versions of himself fragmented into different characters appearing as marionette puppets on stage, Burkett playfully offers multiple breaks of ontological boundaries that question the “inside” and “outside” of the self and its agency. They thus imply an ethics of

autobiographical memory marked by ventriloquy and spectrality (in the sense of Derrida's *Specters of Marx*).

The final day of the conference started with a keynote speech given by Jewish-British writer **Julia Pascal**, in which she addressed the problematic situation of a Jewish British woman writer. As Jews have a rather ambiguous status in Britain regarding their visibility – they are visible in the imagination, but actually quite invisible in real figures –, the question of Jewish identity emerges as an overarching theme in her many identities as an actor, journalist, theatre manager and playwright. In her talk, Pascal, who is the author of such plays as *Theresa* (1990), *The Dybbuk* (1992), *The Yiddish Queen Lear* (1999), *Woman in the Moon* (2001), *Crossing Jerusalem* (2003) and *The Shylock Play* (2007), critically noted that Jewish wealth in Britain tends to support the conservative flagships of culture (Shakespeare, National Theatre etc.), but not Jewish fringe theatre.

In the closing panel of the conference, **Clare Wallace** (Charles University, Prague) used Hans Thies Lehmann's concept of postdramatic theatre in conjunction with theoretical viewpoints on postmodern ethics by Zygmunt Bauman and Emmanuel Lévinas to discuss ethical ambivalence and transgression in such recent plays as David Hare's *The Power of Yes* (2009), Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman* (2003) and Tim Crouch's self-conscious metatheatrical piece *The Author* (2009). Moral transgression was also an important topic in **Heiner Zimmermann's** (University of Heidelberg) paper on Howard Barker's plays, which Zimmermann qualified as a "theatre of moral speculation" in that Barker tests morality at its source in order to endorse an essentially amoral theatre, in opposition to the "humanist moralist squad" of critics and playwrights. However, as Zimmerman argued, Barker's theatre is sustained by the very norms that it transgresses, as demonstrated by the fence that is symbolic of moral norms in his play *The Fence* (2002).

The lively academic debates of the conference were accompanied by two theatre performances: The **Staatstheater Mainz** put on Bruce Norris's *Clybourne Park*, which was followed by a discussion with members of the cast and the production team. The second theatre production, *Murder Beyond the Sundial*, written by **Stuart Marlow**, was performed by **ACTS (Anglophone Collaborative Theatre of Stuttgart)**.

---

*Popular News Discourse. Anglo-American Newspapers, 1833–1988.*  
Zurich, 18 January 2012

*Daniela Landert*  
University of Zurich, Switzerland

---

On 18 January 2012, a one-day workshop took place at the University of Zurich, entitled "Popular News Discourse. Anglo-American Newspapers, 1833–1988". This was the third in a series of five events which are part of the AHRC research network "Exploring the language of the popular in American and British newspapers 1833–1988", coordinated by Martin Conboy from the Centre for the Study of Journalism and History at the University of Sheffield ([www.shef.ac.uk/journalism/research/exploring-lang](http://www.shef.ac.uk/journalism/research/exploring-lang)). The research network aims to bring together researchers from various disciplines, combining perspectives from media and journalism studies, linguistics, literary studies, history, and social sciences in order to analyse popular newspapers published between 1833 and 1988. These two dates frame a key period in the development of popular discourse in Anglo-American newspapers. 1833 marks the

beginning of the Penny Press in the US. The end of the period under investigation, 1988, is the year in which the British *Sun* reached the peak of its circulation. After seminars in Sheffield and New York, which dealt with the use of digital newspaper archives and the long popularisation process, the workshop in Zurich aimed to investigate the discourse of popular British and American newspapers.

The first contribution was presented by **Andie Tucher** (Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University), who investigated the “fake” in American journalism between 1880 and 1920. Around 1880 faking, the practice of embellishing facts with colourful details became a practice openly discussed by reporters. Initially, faking was seen as a way to counter the lack of detailed information necessary to give a good impression of real life. As Tucher showed, it was only towards the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the increasing professionalisation of journalism led to a more negative evaluation of the fake and to its association with the yellow press.

**Jan Chovanec** (Dept. of English and American Studies, Masaryk University) traced the emergence of football in *The Times* between 1862 and 1930. The broadsheet newspaper long resisted the inclusion of football, which was associated with negativity, vulgarity, baseness and violence. Only in the 1860s and 70s did the first match announcements, match reports and intellectual debates appear in *The Times*. Chovanec showed that the structure of these early articles was very different from present-day football reports. He traced the gradual development of distinct genres throughout the period of investigation and related the changes in football reports to broader social changes of the time.

**Paul Rixon** (Roehampton University) also focused on the relation between particular textual conventions, the development of journalism in general, and broader social and technological changes. Studying UK newspapers from the 1950s to the 1980s he investigated how TV criticism evolved over time. At the beginning of the period, TV criticism was closely modelled on older forms of art criticism, such as reviews of plays and films. By the 1970s, however, some critics had moved towards a new style of writing, which was characterised by personal view points, humour, and entertainment. Rixon related this development to an increase of popular journalism as well as to the changing social role of the medium TV.

**Rachel Matthews** (Dept. of Media Communication, Coventry University) dealt with the emergence of typical features of New Journalism in the provincial English newspaper *Midland Daily Telegraph*. She demonstrated how major changes took place within a relatively short period of ten years, between 1895 and 1905, manifesting themselves on various levels. The content shows an increase of human interest, self-promotion and adverts. This is accompanied by changes in layout that help maximise space and a thematic re-organisation of the content. At the same time institutional changes were taking place, such as the division of newspaper staff into editorial and advertising staff.

The presentation by **Alberto Gabriele** (English and American Studies, Tel Aviv University) was devoted to *Belgravia*, a periodical magazine founded in the 1860s and most noted for publishing sensational novels in serial instalments. Gabriele argued that the reading experience of this Victorian periodical has pre-cinematic qualities due to the fragmentation of narration and the juxtaposition of different cultural forms, such as fiction, journalism, and advertising. Moreover, Gabriele argued that the sensational character of the narratives is a trope that can be found in other cultural forms of the period and which can be related to the emergence of a new narrative style in early cinema.

**Ritu Gairola Khanduri** (Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Texas at Arlington) presented a study of the monthly news digest *Review of Reviews* and its use of cartoons. Reproductions of newspaper cartoons from around the world were published in the British news digest from its second issue onwards in 1890. Often dealing with events relevant to Britain, these cartoons provide a global perspective on the British Empire, as well as insights into different national cultures of the time. Khanduri also investigated the selection, presentation and evaluation of cartoons by the editor, whose meta-comments shaped the readers' view of cartoons as news.

**Elliot King** (Loyola University, Maryland) examined the use of the term *jingo* over time, illustrating how social processes are embedded in a single word. His analysis was informed by theoretical frameworks from sociolinguistics, semiotics, and journalism history, and it was based on digital newspaper archives and other electronic resources, like Google books. Investigating the frequency of the term, as well as its associations and evaluations, King concluded that taking the word as a basic unit of analysis can provide an alternative approach for historical journalism studies, which usually tend to focus on stories as the basic unit of analysis.

**Simon Gwyn Roberts** (Dept. of Media, University of Chester) focussed on the Mold Riots 1869-1870 and their coverage in two local Welsh newspapers of the time, the Chester Chronicle and the Flintshire Observer. Analysing the rhetorical frames inviting a reading sympathetic to the actions of the authorities, Roberts pointed out the wider implications of the coverage of the Mold Riots for the early stages of Welsh identity politics. His analysis provided a synthesis of several intersecting contexts of the events: the politicisation of Welsh identity; the tradition of cross-border media; and the dynamism of UK newspapers during the 1860s and 70s, the "Golden Age" of journalism.

The coordinator *and* was the topic of the talk by **Erik Smitterberg** (Dept. of English, Uppsala University). He investigated the frequency with which *and* coordinates phrasal and super-phrasal units in a corpus of 19<sup>th</sup> century newspaper English. His results suggest that the frequency of coordinated phrasal units decreased over the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while the frequency of coordinated super-phrasal units increased. This was related to previous findings on *and* in more recent data, as well as to findings about newspaper language in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the hypothesised colloquialisation of Late Modern English newspapers.

**Dafnah Strauss** (Dept. of History, Tel Aviv University) examined the linguistic practices of four newspapers from Iowa during the election campaign of 1872. A close textual analysis revealed how news texts constructed the story of events, how they provided ideological-interpretative frames, and how they legitimised or de-legitimised the main actors. Three mutually reinforcing textual dimensions were identified, rhetoric, narrative, and discourse, each of which provided editors with possibilities to control the degree of closure of the unfolding story.

**Steve Marti** (Dept. of History, University of Western Ontario) studied the presentation of Canadian soldiers in the British and Canadian press during the First World War. His analysis focussed on the intersection between nationalism, citizenship and gender identities. Comparing the portrayal of (male) Canadian soldiers with that of (female) Canadian military nurses he was able to show clear relations between gender and nationalism. While nurses were often depicted as victims or tragic heroines, soldiers were described in relation to an idealised Canadian archetype, which was directly related to their performance on the battlefield.

In the final presentation, **Carole O'Reilly** (School of Media, Music & Performance, University of Salford) investigated public health discourses in UK newspapers between 1848 and 1925. Framed by two Public Health Acts, this was a period in which public health gained increasing newspaper coverage. She showed how the news discourse on public health issues was characterised by various aims and interests of newspapers, such as scrutinising public health administrations, instructing citizens towards a more healthy way of living, and striving for commercial success.

In sum, the twelve papers provided a rich and multi-faceted view of popular journalism between 1833 and 1988. Several points proved to be of repeated interest, such as the complementary analysis of text and visuals, the role of layout, the advantage of digitised archives, and the triangulation of research methods. Not least, the workshop was characterised by an international and genuinely interdisciplinary exchange.

---

*English in Europe: Debates and Discourses*,  
University of Sheffield (UK), 20-22 April 2012

*Virginia Pulcini*  
University of Turin, Italy

---

In April 2012 the University of Sheffield (UK) hosted the first of a series of international conferences addressing the role and impact of the English language in Europe, a topical theme which offers a variety of challenging questions and research paths. The Sheffield conference, entitled "English in Europe: Debates and Discourses", was the opening event of the project "English in Europe: opportunity or threat?", funded by the Leverhulme Trust, which involves five European universities: Sheffield (UK), Copenhagen (Denmark), Charles University (Czech Republic), Saragoza (Spain) and the South-East Europe Research Centre (SEERC), City College, Tessaloniki (Greece). The prestige of English in the European linguistic scenario, its dominant role in international communication and world affairs and the growing number of competent non-native speakers and learners in European countries are some of the reasons why speaking/learning English is considered both an opportunity for professional and economic growth or a threat to other languages and cultures, a dichotomy aptly echoed in the general title of the project.

The Sheffield conference, organized by Prof. Andrew Linn and Dr. Chryso Hadjidemetriou, was a three-day international event attended by 47 participants. The programme included three plenary lectures and 24 papers distributed across 7 main thematic panels, namely *English in the media*, *Language contact*, *Attitudes towards English*, *English in schools*, *English in higher education*, *English in scientific discourse* and *English as a lingua franca*.

The opening plenary lecture, entitled "Reframing globalization for English in Europe" and presented by **David Block** (University of London), provided an overview of some influential approaches to the social and economic understanding of globalization which have developed along today's dominant ideology of neoliberalism. In this framework, the English language can be seen as a strategic force in the process of 'marketization' of education. A case in point is the 'Anglicization' of post-national European universities, whereby English is steadily becoming the language of instruction in order to raise university profiles and competitiveness, and attract foreign students.

The first panel of the first day – *English in the Media* – opened with the paper “Images of English in the French press” by **Marc Deneire** (Université de Lorraine) in which a cluster analysis of keywords from a variety of right- and left-wing newspapers and magazines provided data on how attitudes to English vary across social strata and economic environments, ranging from full acceptance to traditional resistance to the use of English of the more conservative social élites. In “English in Norway: An analysis of attitudes as expressed in newspaper discourse” **Anne-Line Graedler** (Hedmark University College), drawing on a quantitative, corpus-based and corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis of the media archive Atekst, examined how the issue of English in Norway emerges in newspaper discourse, also extending the analysis to conceptual metaphors revealing negative/positive/changing attitudes to this phenomenon. In “English loanword use and code-switching on Greek television: the attitude of the public” **Zoi Tatsioka** (City College, Tessaloniki) presented the results of a survey based on 400 questionnaires submitted to Greek informants on attitudes to the use of English loanwords and code-switching on Greek television, considering variation among informants’ age group, gender and education, and showing, as expected, that younger speakers have a more favourable attitude to the use of English.

The second thematic panel focussed on *Language contact*. The paper given by **Helge Sandøy** (University of Bergen), “Influence from English: The Nordic experience and experiment”, presented the results of a survey carried out in seven Nordic countries, aimed at comparing attitudes of different language communities to English import words. The Nordic language laboratory provides interesting data on historical changes in the import rate and socio-economic forces influencing such changes, as well as the analysis of specific features affected by English (spelling, morphology, phonology, etc.) in each language. Data contradict stereotypes traditionally associated with some Nordic communities: for example, with reference to English borrowing, Norway has shifted from a purist attitude to a very open one. In “To English or not to English”, **Ivana Palibrk** and **Tiana Tošić** (University of Kragujevac) discussed the alleged invasion of Anglicisms in the Serbian languages which has given rise to a sociolect referred to as Angloserbian. A qualitative analysis of English-derived words and phrases taken from diverse corpora is examined in order to question whether such purist concerns are justified.

The second day of the conference started with a panel specifically devoted to *Attitudes towards English*. **Marcin Zabawa** (University of Silesia) opened the section with “English in Poland: The attitudes of young Poles towards English linguistic influence on Polish”, in which the Polish situation was overviewed as far as the influence of English is concerned and data obtained from questionnaires submitted to Polish university students were illustrated. While the Polish Language Council tries to promote and protect the Polish language from foreign influence, young speakers have contradictory attitudes, criticising, on the one hand, the excessive use of English borrowings and, on the other, using English expressions together with existing Polish equivalents. In “The meaningful use of English in Norway: L2 attitudes, choices and pronunciation”, **Ulrikke Rindal** presented data on attitudes to English pronunciation of Norwegian adolescent learners. She pointed out that, while there is no explicit model pronunciation of English in Norwegian schools, there are social meanings associated to native accents of English. As a result, despite the prestige of British English and the great popularity of American English, learners aim towards a “neutral” variety or use blended phonological variants, as these are perceived as less socially marked. In “English as a ‘threat’ in Finland? Insights from a national survey”, **Sirpa Leppänen**, **Samu Kytölä** and

**Mikko Laitinen** reported on a nation-wide survey on attitudes to the influence of English on Finnish culture and language carried out in 2007. The results reveal that Finns are sensitive to the 'threat discourse', but greater worries concern the influence of Swedish (the second national language) rather than of English, which is becoming a 'domesticated' resource, especially among younger speakers.

The following panels dealt with the teaching and learning of English in Europe. In *English in schools*, **Sue Garton**, **Fiona Copland** and **Anne Burns** (Aston University) presented data from the TEYL (Teaching English to young learners) project, whose aim is to compare teaching practices used by teachers under a variety of conditions around the world. In "Is there any place for the individual in the teaching and learning of English in Europe?", **Florentina Taylor** (University of York) reported on a European ELT Research Partnership focussing on student and teacher identity negotiation in the classroom environment, illustrating data from Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. **Anna Jeeves** (University of Iceland) spoke about "Relevance of English language learning in a changing linguistic environment in Iceland: Proficiency, use and perceptions of young Icelanders", pointing out that the importance of English for university study and employment in Iceland is quite a strong motivational component, also considering the strong presence of English outside the classroom. **Maria Stoicheva** (Sofia University) in "English in multilingual repertoires. An analysis of language choices of Bulgarian students" reported on a survey on university students' motivation for language choices (instrumental vs integrational) in the Bulgarian educational system, which provides for the teaching of two foreign languages, in accordance with European requirements, and supports the idea that 'English is not enough' and multilingualism should be pursued.

The *English in higher education* panel featured a presentation given by **Geoff Sockett** (University of Strasbourg) entitled "The online informal learning of English: From weakness and threat to strength and opportunity through non-classroom contacts with English" in which data were presented in support of the claim that young people today are shifting from EFL learners to EFL users, thanks to the exposure to English in use and interaction through television, the Internet and online contacts via social networks. This change of habits in younger generations is bound to play a greater role in shaping their English proficiency and developing a sense of belonging to a community of practice in which English is used. **Susan Nacey** (Hedmark University College) "Metaphorical creativity in the Extended Circle" presented and discussed instances of creative phraseologies and metaphors introduced in the writings of Norwegian users of English and different degrees of deviation from the reference British/American norms. In her experience as a 'native speaker' reviewer of papers written by students and colleagues alike, Nacey argued that while some totally new patterns in the use of English may be considered as forms of linguistic creativity, the acceptance of unconventional, slightly deviant phrases and collocations could be perceived as unacceptable.

The second day of the conference also featured a stimulating plenary lecture given by **Dennis Baron** (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) entitled "Controlling English abroad while protecting it at home?". Baron argued that, despite the worldwide diffusion of their language, English-speaking homelands have always been worried about the state of their language, fearing especially competition with immigrant languages and shunning innovations from other varieties. This lecture was enlivened by a wealth of examples from many sources, showing that purist concerns and prejudices have often given rise to paradoxical attitudes or measures. Considering the dominant role of English in the world today, native speakers

should accept the fact that a language of wide communication is subject to change. However, while inner circle English still remains the target language for immigrants, native speakers should stop trying to control the use of English abroad.

The day wound up with a very interesting Panel session on “Spanish Researchers Publishing in English-medium Scientific Journals: Opportunities, challenges and threats across disciplinary areas”. This session consisted in four reports presented by members of the ENEIDA team (Spanish Team for Intercultural Studies of Discourse), namely **Ana I. Moreno**, (Universidad de León), **Irene López Navarro** (Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales), **Pilar Mur-Dueñas**, **Rosa Lorés-Sanz** (Universidad de Zaragoza), **Jesús Rey Rocha** (Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales), **Itesh Sachdev** (University of London), **Sally Burgess** (Universidad de La Laguna). The focus of this ongoing project is to explore the needs of Spanish academics for training in English for Research Publication Purposes in different academic disciplines, as competence in English is an indispensable condition for disseminating research on an international level. To start with, the reports presented here illustrated the methodology adopted to create a large database containing information about the use of English by Spanish scholars for publication purposes; then they focussed in particular on three disciplinary communities, i.e. researchers in chemistry, business and history. Preliminary data reveal that scholars in chemistry and business have higher proficiency in English and are more motivated to improve their skills, as English is a necessary requirement for publishing in prestigious journals; by contrast, the perception of history scholars is less favourable to English. Overall, the wealth of data presented by the Spanish team was particularly stimulating, as it dealt with a problem that is shared by European academics facing the need to compete internationally with the dissemination of scientific knowledge using English.

The third day of the Sheffield conference started with the panel on *English in scientific discourse*. The first paper, given by **Carmen Pérez-Llantada** and **Ramón Plo** (University of Zaragoza) entitled “The geopolitics of languages in global academia: The case of the Spanish Peninsula”, further discussed the role of English in Spanish academic settings. New needs for the internationalization of higher education, research networking and visibility have made English a necessity, especially for scientific publications in English-medium journals, threatening the status and role of local languages in Spanish academia. The use of English as a lingua franca for scientific dissemination, both written and oral, has also resulted in reported discursive hybridization between Anglophone models and Spanish written academic style. The next two papers, “Problematizing parallel language use: Students’ and lecturers’ perceptions of using English at a major Swedish university” by **Maria Kuteeva** (Stockholm University) and “Bilingual practices in higher education in Northern Europe: A case for terminology planning?” by **Anna Kristina Hultgren** (University of Copenhagen) addressed another important aspect of academic training, i.e. the use of English in university education, a practice that is widespread especially in Scandinavian countries and in the Netherlands. Kuteeva discussed the problems raised by the 2006 Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy imposing “parallel language use” (English and Swedish) in Swedish higher education. The emerging difficulties relate to the insufficient command of English or of Swedish by both staff and students, and the attendant issue of “domain loss” in national scientific discourse. As for bilingual practices in Nordic countries’ higher education, Hultgren raised concerns over the failure to develop adequate scientific terminology in local languages, owing to the dominance

of English, on the basis of a survey on chemistry, physics and computer science terminology and their equivalents in Icelandic, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and Finnish.

The last panel on *English as a lingua franca* featured three papers. In "English as a lingua franca in Europe: An investigation of international communication and intelligibility in the EU workplace" **Pamela Rogerson-Revell** (University of Leicester) and **Wafa Zoghbor** (Zayed University, UAE) discussed the use of English by European professionals in the international workplace communicating in ELF, focussing in particular on pronunciation, and presented data on intelligibility and comprehensibility tests, stressing the need for more detailed phonological description of ELF and the establishment of new targets for the teaching of pronunciation. **Claus Gnutzmann, Jenny Jakisch, Frank Rabe** and **Joana Willim** (University of Braunschweig) "English as a lingua franca – A source of identity for young Europeans?" posed the question of whether a truly European identity can be achieved through the promotion of linguistic diversity, as implied by the present European policy of multilingualism, or whether ELF could act as a unifying identity force in this process. A survey carried out with German undergraduate students in the humanities, mechanical engineering and life sciences provided data on such perceptions of European identity formation. **Josep Soler-Carbonell** (University of Oxford) "English as a lingua franca in Estonia: Some evidence from ethnographic research" examines the linguistic situation in Estonia, where two typologically different languages – Estonian and Russian – coexist and English may emerge as a language of inter-ethnic communication. Ethnographic data have revealed that language preferences are ideologically based, and future language planning may consider the possibility of promoting ELF as a medium for mutual understanding among the two speech communities in Estonia.

The concluding plenary lecture given by **Sue Wright** (University of Portsmouth) "The maps of languages" was an excellent round up of all the issues debated in the conference, delving into the European social and political contexts and the shift from nationalism to globalization. The growth of nation-states in the Modern period has left a strong ideological legacy based on the close link between languages and national identities, picturing the map of Europe as a mosaic. The new globalized dimension of international communication is challenging such a deeply-rooted worldview of separate territorial mapping and calls for the acceptance of a new configuration of the communicative space.

The Sheffield conference was a highly successful and enjoyable event, thanks to the high quality of the papers presented, the excellent organization, the ample time allotted to discussion and the friendly atmosphere. The next events of the project "English in Europe: opportunity or threat?" will be *English as a scientific and research language*, 29 November – 1 December 2012 (Saragoza, Spain), *The English language in teaching in European higher education*, 29 April – 1 May 2013 (Copenhagen, Denmark), *Responses to the lingua franca role of English*, 2013 (CITY College, Thessaloniki, Greece) and *English in business and commerce*, 2013 (Charles University, Czech Republic).

---

**Post-Empire Imaginaries? 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual GNEL/ASNEL Conference,  
University of Bern, 18-20 May 2012**

*Annika McPherson  
University of Oldenburg, Germany*

---

The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference of GNEL/ASNEL, the Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English, from May 18-20 proved once more to be the main venue for postcolonial studies of a broad disciplinary and interdisciplinary variety in the German-speaking academic community. For the first time in the history of the association, the conference was held in Switzerland, at the University of Bern. The truly impressive organization by the conveners Virginia Richter (Chair of Modern English Literature) and Barbara Buchenau (Professor of Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies) and their team, headed by Daniella Gáti and Marijke Denger-Kähler, made the meeting a full success. With 146 participants from 20 different countries and 68 presentations including three keynote lectures, 55 papers, posters as well as panel discussions, the sessions offered a wide range of angles from which to consider the conference theme "Post-Empire Imaginaries? Anglophone Literature, History and the Demise of Empires." As noted by ASNEL President Mark Stein (Chair of English, Postcolonial and Media Studies at Westfälische Wilhelms-University Münster) in the welcome address, not often has the term literature actually been placed in ASNEL conference titles. Together with the programmatic focus on empires in the plural, this was seen as indicative of the widening set of disciplinary contexts and the multidisciplinary methodologies that have become necessary to unpack the complexities of the cultural, academic and critical work being done in the name of Anglophone Literature(s). The question mark in the title in many ways structured the event and ran through several strands of debate within and across the keynote lectures and the ensuing discussions.

When **Donna Landry** (Director of Research at the School of English, University of Kent at Canterbury) opened the comparative trajectory by way of "PostOttoman Rifts in Time: Postimperial, Postcolonial, Oppositional?," she also set the tone for the 'question mode' regarding the 'postimperial' which continued to run through many of the subsequent presentations. The "Ottomanised point of view" shifted the angle from London, Paris or New York to Istanbul. By example of the Evliya Çelebi Way Project and its historical re-enactment promoting cultural reconnections, the keynote emphasized the need for a comparative approach to imperialisms and for a mutual interrogation of the 'postimperial' and the 'postcolonial' in oppositional scholarly agendas trying to untangle the paradoxical yearning for both Empire and its demise.

**Alfred Hiatt** (Reader in Medieval Literature and Culture, Queen Mary, University of London) gave the second day's keynote lecture on "Maps of Empires Past." Hiatt used the conjunction of the terms 'post-empire' and 'imaginaries' to show how maps that emerge in vastly different context historicize spatial representations of empire and how they comment on the 'afterlives' of empires through both visual and verbal means. A contemporary reworking of a medieval map demonstrated how religious references and narratives become pluralized and reinterpret the world image conveyed therein. Thus, multiple temporalities emerged as a second aspect of inquiries into the 'postimperial', emphasizing future trajectories rather than suggesting historical closure.

The third day's keynote lecture by **Laura Ann Stoler** (Willy Brandt Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology and Historical Studies at The New School for Social Research, New York) addressed "Concept Work: On Recrafting Post-Empire Histories," the conference's third major trajectory. The conceptual vocabulary and interpretive categories used to trace "the occluded genealogies of imperial effects," Stoler suggested, reveal the necessity of methodological renovations for the study of colonial histories in order to "capture the uneven, recursive qualities of the visions and practices that imperial formations have animated" and that pervade the present's "logos and pathos of empire." Her emphasis on the disabling of linkages in histories of empire as inherent in colonial practices and ways of knowing outlined urgent historiographic and conceptual tasks.

The 14 panels with participants from 16 countries in many ways mirrored the comparative, temporal and conceptual trajectories of the keynote lectures. Panel titles included "Comparative Views of Empires" and "Postcolonial Cultural Studies" as well as "Historicising (Post-)Empire" or "Liquid Modernity: Constructions of Space and Time." They were complemented by five Teachers' Workshops on different regional and methodological aspects of postcolonial literatures and cultures in the EFL classroom, as well as two "Under Construction" panels in which junior scholars presented their work in progress in poster format.

Within the panels, seemingly familiar themes such as cosmopolitanism, diaspora and displacement entered into productive dialogue with new comparative frames of reference, e.g. through an Oceanic rather than Caribbean take on modernity. By example of the blind spots in theorizing empire regarding the lease or purchase of imperial territories, it became clear once more that theories as explanatory accounts are in need of constant revision and elaboration. The affective dimension of colonial and imperial desire in conjunction with marketing was elaborated through an analysis of American travel ads. That the historical trajectory of 'post-empires' can even refer back to 'pre-Adamitical' imaginaries was noted by way of an eighteenth century text, whereas the function of late eighteenth-century visual representations of the demise of empires was compared to that of nineteenth-century cultural experiences of vanishing empires in panoramas. Considering how twentieth-century West African authors represent transitions in sovereignty surely complicates dialogues on how empire is historicized, as do poetic interventions from the Pacific Islands, literary multilingualism within the UK and an analysis of the role of music as expressive of nostalgia in 'postcolonial' writing. Yet, it was precisely through such juxtapositions that the question mode regarding 'post-empire' was productively maintained throughout the conference.

The conference was framed by a Spoken Word Event featuring Chirikure Chirikure, Meena Kandasamy, Lebogang Mashile and Jurczok 1001. This event was co-organized by *artlink* (the office for cultural cooperation and Swiss centre of competence for arts and culture from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe). It was preceded by a ceremony during which the ASNEL Graduate Award 2012 was conferred to Regina Anna Petra Schulz (University of Cologne) for her graduate thesis on "Performances in the US-Mexican-American Borderlands" – yet another indication of the widened scope of the areas and fields of inquiry covered. A Brown Bag Lunch Reading continued the ASNEL tradition of conversations with authors. Yvette Edwards read from her 2011 debut novel *A Cupboard Full of Coats* and Dikeogu Egwuatu Chukwumerije shared poems from his collection *The Revolution Has no Tribe* (2008), which features not only poetry, but also artwork, pictures and descriptive as well as educational essays on African history, places and people. Both cultural events

resonated with the audience and served as reminders to continually engage in – and probably increase again – the dialogue with writers.

Another feature of ASNEL, its self-reflexive critical and organizational practice, found further room during a panel addressing “Academic Post-Empire Imaginaries” as well as a Panel Debate on “New Directions in the Study of Literature and Culture after the Demise of Empires.” The intense and highly productive debate on interdisciplinary and methodological shifts within and across the diverse fields of Anglophone literary, cultural and media practices in some ways ran through the conference as a subtext. It also echoed the conceptual challenges that were addressed in many contributions.

In 2013, the GNEL/ASNEL Annual Conference will be held at Chemnitz University of Technology from May 9-11 under the auspices of convener Cecile Sandten (Professor of English Literature) and her team. The bracketing within the theme “Re-Inventing the Postcolonial (in the) Metropolis” promises to be as productive as the question mark has proven to be for “Post-Empire Imaginaries?”

---

*The third International Conference on Historical News Discourse (CHINED III),  
Rostock, 18-19 May 2012*

*Nicholas Brownlees  
University of Florence, Italy*

---

The third International Conference on Historical News Discourse (CHINED III) was held at Rostock University from 18-19 May 2012. The university, which is the oldest in the Baltic region, generously provided excellent conference facilities close to the centre of this charming Hanseatic port. From this vantage point, the participants turned their attention to varying news genres and discourses from the 17<sup>th</sup> century up until the present day. Whilst the majority of the presentations focused on English news texts, the conference organisers, **Birte Bös** and **Lucia Kornexl**, also rightly decided to welcome news discourse research relating to other European cultures and languages. This decision not only reflects the marked inter-European dimension in news dissemination in early modern Europe but also the globalization of news in modern day society.

The range of news-based topics presented at the conference illustrates the multiple guises in which news has been communicated over time. For much of the early modern period written news was communicated through letters, both in the form of personal and impersonal correspondence. The latter can be referred to as newsletters, that is, the letters were frequently written up by professional news gatherers and correspondents who sent out periodical manuscript updates of both domestic and foreign news to their paid-up clients. However, personal correspondence also carried news though this frequently centred on family and local matters. This aspect of personal epistolary news in the early modern period was examined by **Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti** (University of Florence). In a paper entitled “Communicating news in a gentry network: the personal correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis Bacon, 1613-1644”, Del Lungo Camiciotti investigated the private correspondence of Lady Cornwallis Bacon in order to assess the evolution of ways of communicating news within a gentry network and the discursive identity of a gentlewoman. The investigation of Lady Jane’s correspondence seems to show that in the early modern period the function of exchanging news, including public news in personal letters, seems increasingly to serve the

function of creating an epistolary world where participants express proximity by exchanging news and gossip relevant to the correspondents' world.

However, apart from the communication of personal and impersonal epistolary news, the first half of the seventeenth-century witnessed the beginning of periodical print news in England. The first small folio, single-sheet translations of German and Dutch newsheets were sent to England in 1620, and with them periodical print news in the form of constant if not periodically regular news publications began. At first these newsheets were little more than literal translations of their European counterparts, but when London publishers decided to write up their own news publications in 1622 they immediately had to face the question confronting all news publishers and professional news writers: what language and textual framework should be adopted to help persuade readers that the money they are spending is a good investment. It is this question which **Nicholas Brownlees** (University of Florence) examined in his paper, " 'We have in some former bookes told you': the significance of metatext in early modern news". Through an analysis of terminology news writers themselves adopted in relation to their own publications during the first decades of periodical news it is possible to gain insights into not just how seventeenth-century English news discourse evolved but why.

This same historical period was also the focus of the paper presented by **Elisabetta Cecconi** (University of Florence). However, rather than concentrating on seventeenth-century periodical news publications and formats, she also took into consideration broadsides and occasional news pamphlets in her examination of seventeenth-century crime news. In her comparative analysis of this news topic, she investigated how crime news was reported in relation to page layout, proto-leads, discourse structure, and the distribution and relevance of authorial metadiscourse and factuality. The findings in Cecconi's paper, as indeed in many of the papers, was based on retrievable electronic corpora that in the past few years have entered the public domain. These new, easily accessible resources are proving a great stimulus to exciting research in historical news discourse. All those researchers (and not a few were at the Rostock conference) who have spent many a long day on the compilation and digitization of historical news corpora should be warmly applauded for their efforts in promoting research in historical news. One of the most well-known of these corpora is the ZEN Corpus (The Zurich English Newspaper Corpus) that consists of 1.6 million words and is presently the largest digitized corpus of late 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers. Compiled under the supervision of **Udo Fries** (University of Zurich), the ZEN corpus provided the source texts for Fries's paper at Rostock. In his examination of "Home news from 1665 to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century", Fries underlined some of the distinguishing content and linguistic features of British home news over this 130-year period.

A characteristic of all forms of news discourse, both domestic and foreign, historical and present, involves referencing to time and space. However, while such referencing is common in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries one needs to examine such referencing within the discourse practices and readers' world knowledge of those times. To what extent did the relatively slow transmission of news, coupled with readers' limited awareness of extra-territorial geographical knowledge, influence the comprehension and realization of spatial and temporal news language? These questions were examined by **Claudia Claridge** (University of Duisburg-Essen) in her paper entitled "News in Space and Time".

Changing news discourse practices, and the bearing these have on the language of news, were also examined by **Birte Bös**. Although now at the University of Duisburg-Essen,

Bös had previously been at Rostock University where she worked on the Rostock Newspaper Corpus. This 600,000 word corpus comprises British news reports from 1700 to 2000. In her paper “300 years of news discourse: An expedition through the Rostock Newspaper Corpus”, Bös illustrated how an analysis of keywords and their collocations in the Rostock Corpus can help us detect important changes in the concept of news and news procedures over the last centuries.

In his paper, “Colloquialization in Nineteenth-century News Discourse”, **Erik Smitterberg** (University of Uppsala) also made use of a digitized corpus, though his corpus comprises nineteenth-century British news texts. In his examination of the Corpus of Nineteenth-century Newspaper English (CNNE), Smitterberg focused on the extent to which features of colloquialization that characterise much of the modern press can also be detected in nineteenth-century news discourse. **Isabel Ermida**’s paper likewise focused on the nineteenth-century but rather than analysing hard news itself what was examined was a parody *cum* satire of news reports. The reports in question were written by Mark Twain, and in her presentation – “Historical precursors of spoof journalism: the case of Mark Twain” – Ermida (University do Minho) examined some of the linguistic and discursive strategies employed in the very amusing spoofs. Such hoaxes as “Petrified man” (1862) and “A bloody massacre near Carson” (1863) are considered pertinent illustrations of a genre – news satire – that blends social criticism, humour and intentional deception.

These above papers focused either directly or indirectly on published hard news but it is well known that as the English press developed from its humble, one-sheet days of the early seventeenth century so the kind of news included in the weekly, biweekly, tri-weekly and then daily publications became ever more variegated. One of the topics that attracted increasing attention was medical and scientific news. In her plenary address entitled “Medical and scientific news in England 1650-1800: texts targeted at professional and lay audiences”, **Irma Taavitsainen** (University of Helsinki) examined this topic within the 150-year period from 1650-1800. The two publications that were examined in depth were the eighteenth-century *Gentleman’s Magazine* and the 1665 numbers of the periodical journal *Philosophical Transactions*. Making use of two corpora – the *Early Modern English Medical Texts* (2010) for *Philosophical Transactions* and *Late Modern English Medical texts 1700-1800* for the *Gentleman’s Magazine* – Taavitsainen combined a qualitative study with corpus-based methodology to investigate the transition from the thought-styles of the earlier periods to the later, more modern approaches to the making of scientific news.

However, the kind of news that increasingly came to find its way into the Late Modern newspapers did not just centre around the traditional news narrative associated with hard news or the more culturally involved exposition typical of such topics as medical and scientific news. What became ever more important in the periodical English press was advertising. Described by Addison in 1710 as “accounts of news from the little World”, advertising came to take up increasing amounts of newspaper space as its financial contribution to the publication’s well-being became ever more important. It is this importance that was addressed by **Minna Palander-Collin** (University of Helsinki) in her paper on “Changing genre conventions and socio-cultural change in newspaper advertisements”. Basing her study on advertisements in *The Times*, Palander-Collin analysed trends in advertisement referencing to the advertiser, the audience and third parties during the nineteenth century. One broad trend involved the decrease in person referencing over the

course of the century as advertisements moved from a person centred to a more product centred style.

The four other papers to complete the CHINED III programme were primarily focused on news language in non-English speaking environments though given the cross-border dimension of media discourse the studies provided a stimulating intercultural perspective to the previous contributions. **Jorge Pedro Sousa**, **Sandra Tuna** and **Elsa Simões** (Fernando Pessoa University) presented a paper entitled "Royal and belligerent propaganda in *Mercúrio Português* (1663-1667): Discursive representations of royal power and governmental ruling of Castelo Melhor". Simões, who was presenting on behalf of her colleagues, provided initial findings regarding the extent to which the Portuguese periodical *Mercúrio Português* – published in the context of the Portuguese war of independence against Castile and against the backdrop of palace intrigue eventually leading to the overthrow of king Alfonso VI – was essentially propagandistic or informative in purpose. The research question links up well to other Early Modern debate regarding the role of periodical print news. For example, to what extent were the similarly named English mercuries of the 1640s and 1650s the expression of straightforward journalistic enterprise or rather the mouthpiece of political faction?

Iberian affairs were also tackled by **Rita Luis** (Pompeu Fabra University) though in this research the focus is on the Portuguese Revolution of 1974-1975. The presentation – "The Spanish reaction to the Portuguese revolution of 1974-1974 viewed through the legal daily press" – examined meaning making in the Spanish reporting of the Portuguese revolution. In particular, Luis indicated ways in which headline choice, language display and use of pictures contributed to meaning construction.

The final two papers of the conference took us outside the confines of print news and right up to the present day. **Lena Gialabouki** (University of Thessaloniki) spoke on "Changes in the generic structure of Greek television news: from narrative to dialogic forms of news broadcasting" while **Elizabeth Prommer** (University of Rostock) gave a paper on "New forms of news via Twitter, Facebook and Blogs". Both papers underlined the interactive features of modern-day news transmission, whether it be through television news or social networks such as Twitter.

Many thanks go to the conference organizing committee – Birte Böes, Lucia Kornexl and Birte Dammann – for providing not only a very stimulating conference programme but also a most enjoyable range of social activities both in and outside Rostock. On the back of the success of CHINED III, we are already looking forward to CHINED IV (Helsinki, 2014) and CHINED V (Fernando Pessoa, 2015).

---

**Nicholas Brownlees, Gabriella Del Lungo and John Denton (eds) 2010. *The Language of Public and Private Communication in a Historical Perspective*. Newcastle u.T.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.**

*Dirk Schultze*  
*University of Göttingen, Germany*

---

Though based on a 2009 Florence conference, the volume under discussion is decidedly intended as a stand-alone work on the topic, rather than loosely presenting contributions to the biennial Italian conference on the History of the English Language (p. 1). The individual chapters thus explore how far private and public forms of communication can be identified as

different discourses, and which extralinguistic features shaped the language used in these forms of communication. As a matter of course, the authors need to address the notion of 'private' and 'public' in a historical context, and in her "Introduction" (1–23) Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti draws on analyses by, most prominently, DUBY, Ariès and Habermas that have shaped our understanding of how the distinction between the two spheres evolved in the course of the late-medieval to early modern periods. Since 'publishing' played a vital role in establishing a 'public' sector in the West, and, in turn, helped to re-interpret the role of privacy, an investigation of different forms of this activity, its degree of 'publicity' and its relationship to linguistic matters is a thrilling enterprise. The objects of study are just as promising, ranging from various types of letters to diaries, from bills and notebooks to newspapers, and including religious as well as legal and other discourses.

Of the 18 contributions, three are devoted to letters. Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade's "Communicative Competence and the Language of Eighteenth-century Letters" (24–45) makes a case for the study of an individual's communicative competence, or idiolect, here focused on the perhaps surprising example of the 'prescriptivist' per se, Robert Lowth. Based on a sample of 330 letters representing Lowth's correspondence with varying addressees, she demonstrates Lowth's awareness of different degrees of formality by way of comparing his metalinguistic writings and his own usage. Variation in formality, Tieken-Boon van Ostade found, ranges from lexical choice (*affectionate*) to non-standard spelling (*immediatly*), from double negation (*not ... neither*) to grammatical variation (*you was, was wrote*) in "the familiar style in writing", but unlikely to be found in "the solemn and elevated Style" (both Lowth's phrasings, quoted on p. 41). Since some of the letters (those exchanged with William Warburton) became a matter of public interest, the linguistic features signalling degrees of formality and (decreasing) politeness showcase the vital importance of such idiolect case studies, thus turning the article into a perfect opener for the volume as a whole.

Marina Dossena's "'We beg to suggest': Features of Legal English in Late Modern Business Letters" (46–64) as well as Alessandra Levorato's "Keywords, Collocations and ideology: An Analysis of the Castlereagh Act of Union Correspondence in its Political Context" (65–82) broaden the study of correspondence to include legal and political discourse, placed at the intersection of confidentiality and public relevance. Central to Dossena's research is the question of politeness in specialized discourse, in particular in situations where the correspondents' competence is asymmetrical (as is often the case in communication about legal issues). Through a corpus analysis of forms of person deixis, modality and expert vocabulary as found in 400 nineteenth-century business letters the author successfully demonstrates interactants' politeness strategies, involving encoder-orientedness as well as negative politeness strategies concerning recipients, and the mediation of specialized concepts. Levorato more specifically takes into account the socio-historical context, Anglo-Irish political diplomacy concerning the Act of Union (1707), as reflected in a corpus of 276 letters drawn from the *Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marquess of Londonderry*, which cover the period from 1798–1822. Levorato's analysis is of great methodological concern; not only do the letters she analysed offer the opportunity to distinguish between those that are intended as strictly private, or confidential (see pp. 70–2), and those that may well have functioned in public. What is more, the author's analysis of evaluative meaning in discourse by drawing on semantic prosodies in particular (cf. p. 73) gives an insight into both methodological issues as well as into how far the correspondents' position is informed by 'ideological distance' (p. 80).

Four articles may be said to form a group addressing specifically private forms of communication. In Antonio Bertacca's "The Language of Charles Darwin's *Red Notebook*" (83-99) linguistic markedness, or rather 'markedness reversal', owes to the 'self-oriented', 'intra-personal' character of the notebook, in which "full expression would have been unsuitable" (p. 90). Assuming a functional point of view, Bertacca focuses on ellipsis as a prominent textual phenomenon, thereby questioning purely intratextual, formal explanations for this form of 'carelessness'. Advantaged by the fact that Darwin's is a scientist's notebook, which allows for assuming biunique lexical relationships, Bertacca arrives at an extended definition of ellipsis which takes into account "extratextual components". While the author is able to corroborate this claim with suitable examples, his examples of misspellings, misnumbered pages, or word-order issues – interesting as they may be in themselves – fall outside "[o]ther cases of economy in language use" (ch. 6) and leave the article somewhat undecided as to its true objective. Gabriella Di Martino's "Motions and Emotions in a Lady Traveller's Writing" (100-115) sets out from assumptions about feminine textual strategies (Foucault, Sara Mills) to reveal tendencies of textualizing the inner self in the travel writings of Margaret, Lady Blessington (1789-1849), i.e. the latter's *The Idler in Italy* (publ. 1839) and part of her correspondence. Di Martino finds this tendency reflected in Lady Blessington's preference for colours in her description of objects and people, noting how much attention is given to the description of people in general. While her analysis of *The Idler* provides much evidence, Di Martino's remarks on signs of an increase in privacy in the correspondence rely heavily on secondary sources. A prominent case is analysed by Giovanni Iamartino and Angela Andreani in their collaborative article "In the Queen's Name: The writings of Elizabeth I between public and private communication" (116-134). A Renaissance sovereign, Elizabeth rarely enjoyed full privacy, the authors point out, thus her communication will be found to belong to "the grey area between private and public, [...] with at least some interplay between single and multiple authorship" (p. 117). Iamartino and Andreani chose for their analysis Elizabeth's poems and speeches written or circulated during her reign. While the publication of their findings necessitated a selection of material, the criteria applied by the authors (e.g. self-representation as found in poems and speeches vs. "deliberate construction of the persona", 119 n. 2) are not fully convincing for the present reviewer. However, the material used for the investigation is highly stimulating and showcases the difficulties of determining the private need for expression vs. the public need for diplomacy. One would have wished for more commentary by the authors, for instance, on the reasons for Elizabeth's and/or her co-authors' choice of a more formal register in a document recording a speech as actually delivered, and more emotional language in a document intended for (international) publication (cf. the quotes in the upper half of p. 128). Whether the reference to a "Queen Elizabeth Tudor" (rather than, say, "Elizabeth Tudor, Queen of England") in the opening paragraph is intentional escapes the present reviewer. – In his "'Hail Mary' goes underground: Public and private religious discourse in 16<sup>th</sup> century England" (135-160), John Denton is concerned with forms of private and public devotion in Early Modern England vis-à-vis Catholic and Protestant/Evangelical strands of Christianity. More precisely, the author analyzes books for private devotion (such as primers), public service books and "the mixed public-private fortunes of English Bibles" (p. 135) and the combination of text, illustrations and captions, and paratextual features in them. Considering liturgical textual material as 'performance texts', Denton points out that the debate about liturgical language is one about 'noise', which in traditional mass left the performed text inaudible (due to architectural and other features) and incomprehensible to

the majority (since it was in Latin). With mass-goers returning to private prayer even in public, and a high degree of 'privacy' assigned – by the clergy – to texts aimed at the public, the language debate becomes understandable as a key issue in reformist and counter-reformist discourse. In particular Denton's lively accounts of the struggle for uniformity, resulting in the publication of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the fortunes of English bibles is informative and engaging.

Laura Wright's "Eighteenth-Century London Non-Standard Spellings as Evidenced by Servants', Tradesmen's and Shopkeepers' Bills" (161-190) focuses on the hanging signboards of London shops, on trade-cards handed out by shopkeepers, and in particular bills by 'letterate' (vs. 'literate') tradespeople. Though less concerned with questions of public and private forms of communication as such, Wright's detailed account of spelling variation in her material demonstrates the complexities involved in assessing the driving forces behind non-standard/standardized spellings: various local and social accents on the one side, and access to spelling-books and formal education on the other. Regardless of the interest every historical linguist will share in the establishment of a standard language, relics of non-standardized usages in material such as that investigated by the author do a lot to compensate for the lack of any audio-data from earlier stages of English.

Nicholas Brownlees' essay "*Capt. Badiley's Answer unto Capt. Appleton's Remonstrance* (1653): The Recontextualisation in Print of Private Correspondence" (191-212) examines epistolary writings, and in particular it is concerned with linguistic and content-level changes that come with the shift from manuscript (private) to print (public), alongside paratextual and metaepistolary variation. Brownlees thus goes beyond Schneider's (2005) study of epistolarity which is focused on paratextual features only. As for his material, the author was in the fortunate position to have access not only to correspondence between Badiley and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand II, as it appeared in print, but also to drafts and fair copies of the same. Among the changes introduced in the print versions the author points out a decrease in orthographic variety and an increase in modernisation, indicating a tendency towards standardization involved in the publishing in printed format. Brownlees convincingly attributes to this a 'pragmatic force' in line with Badiley's intent to exculpate himself from wrong-doing and cowardice. Using standardized orthography in the printed versions, "he also iconically wanted to show himself to be a man who understood and conformed to public expectation" (p. 199). Further noticeable changes found by the author are the anglicisation of placenames, but also changes in content (omissions and additions) with a pragmatic impact on the message to be conveyed with the printed letter (unfortunately there seems to have occurred a change in editing principles, so that what Brownlees intended to be underlined is now set in italics; cf. the example on p. 201).

Two contributions are concerned with decidedly 'public' means of communication, newspapers. Udo Fries in "Identifying Diversity in English Newspapers in 1701" (213-227) aims at identifying linguistic criteria to distinguish between different types of newspapers, especially between so-called "quality" and "popular papers" – a distinction usually made on the basis of either socio-historical or content-based criteria. His investigation is based on the *Zurich Corpus of Early English Newspapers*, to which he added more papers published in 1701. While Fries's reservations against paragraph length as an indicator of a paper's quality-status are convincing, his analysis of sentence length would have profited, I think, from more detailed statistics, such as for instance a discussion of maximum/minimum sentence length beyond the statistically meager averages. As his analysis suggests, sentence length may vary

significantly in different sections of a given newspaper (cf. his tables 3 and 4 on p. 221), and one would have wished for a discussion of the influence of stylistic idiosyncrasies (foreign news reports were obviously sent to the papers by individuals; cf. his examples 1, 2 and 4). What is more, the relevance of sentence length to a paper's (stylistic) "quality" is called into question by examples 8 and 9, and one cannot but agree with the author's call for closer investigations into such details, since style, and hence quality, does not suffer from clarity of expression. Given the syntactic constraints of English, the latter may be more readily connected to short periods rather than long ones. It will be interesting to see if future investigations into the linguistic make-up of different newspapers vis-à-vis their socio-historical standing are able to corroborate a priori assumptions about the relationship of style and "quality". In her contribution "Dialogic Quotation Patterns in Historical News Reports" (228-244), Birte Bös scrutinizes the juncture between private and public as found in first-person quotations "as remnants of institutionalised and private conversations" (p. 228). Based on the *Rostock Newspaper Corpus* (1700-2000), her findings reveal a dramatic increase in the use of first-person quotations especially in the course of the twentieth century. At the same time, however, the fact that journalism became increasingly professionalized along with a tendency towards 'synthetic personalisation' (after Fairclough 2001) left their traces on the representation of original speech events. Bös convincingly argues that dialogic patterns, peaking in number and length in the nineteenth century, in more recent papers are often preserved in only one-turn sequences preceded or followed by, for instance, 'reactive' parts in what thus functions as an adjacency pair.

Elisabetta Cecconi's contribution "Witness Narratives in 17th Century Trial Proceedings: A Case Study of Historical Courtroom Public Discourse" (245-262) identifies witnesses' strategies to make their statements informative and persuasive. In her analysis, based on Harris's (2001) model of narrative structure, she identifies different communicative functions distributed across the three levels of narrative structure (orientation – core narrative – point): referential, persuasive-incriminating, and expressive function, all of which are subcategorized and soundly exemplified. Cecconi's article thus provides an interesting and convincing analysis of linguistic usage at the brink of communicative immediacy and formality as required by the courtroom setting.

Two articles represent contributions to the lexicography of English (varieties) rather than to English Pragmatics. Thomas Christiansen's "The Evolution of a Distinct Australian Lexis as Seen in the Public Discourse of Nineteenth century [sic] Bush Ballads and Spoken Verse" (263-285) focuses on new or modified lexical items as found in a distinct Australian public genre. The present reviewer cannot but voice his reservations about the validity of several findings, if not the overall picture presented here. Apart from a certain sloppiness as far as layout matters are concerned (e.g. "non-standard" vs. "non standard" p. 274; "Hlberno" several times on p. 276; why "AB" for *Aborigine* [sic], but "ABOR?" for *Presumed Aborigine*, etc. on p. 276?; why "corpora" on p. 281; etc.), my main contention derives from the fact that the author presents his bush ballads corpus as made up of nine collections of texts, while in the results section only six sections of the corpus seem to have been analysed. Provided readers are willing to study the matter in some depth, they will find that Christiansen apparently lumped together texts published under the same name (cf. Table 1, p. 272 – Paterson = sections 3, 6 and 7; Lawson = sections 4 and 5) – despite the fact that one of the Paterson collections was published earlier than both of Lawson's. Such contention may appear to be overpedantic; however, what are we to make of an article that presents a chronological tendency (cf. Figures

2 and 3, p. 274/281), but carelessly suppresses precise publication dates in its analysis? As interesting as the quantitative analysis may be, I also wonder whether it wouldn't have been more telling if the quality of linguistic innovation vs. its (exact) source had been studied in more detail. For instance, I am intrigued by the fact that *bloke* was incorporated in the analysis as the only word of Welsh Gypsy origin. Since the *Oxford English Dictionary* records the word already for 1851 in English, why assume a contribution made by an admittedly rare source? In sum, the article demonstrates that the number of specifically Australian lexical items increased towards the beginning of the twentieth century – but who would have guessed otherwise? – Alicia Rodríguez-Álvarez in her article on “Spanish Borrowings in Early Modern English Travelogues and Dictionaries, or How to Make the New Reality in the Spanish Colonies Intelligible to English Readers” (286-305) investigates fourteen travel accounts of the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and compares the findings with both the *OED* and six contemporary monolingual dictionaries (cf. p. 289f.). In her treatment of mechanisms to render the meaning of Spanish words in English (ch. 5), she finds that such ‘borrowings’ are either accompanied by definitions and such like, or are provided with equivalents or translations, for instance introduced by a coordinating conjunction such as *or* (cf. “*Calabaza or gords*”, p. 299). However, from her discussion, in ch. 4, of the (lexicographical) results it transpires that Rodríguez-Álvarez apparently treated any Spanish word used in an English text as a loanword (or ‘borrowing’). It is here that a discussion of the status of such items as loanwords is badly missed – and her pointing out words not recorded by the *OED* (cf. p. 295) is thus flawed by the absence of any remark on that dictionary’s policies regarding the incorporation of lemmas. Note that the number of ‘borrowings’ “postdated or just not entered in the *OED*” as given on p. 301 should be 47 according to the numbers given on p. 295. At the end of her “Conclusion”, the author adds further examples (p. 301f.), which seems to me very unusual and somewhat redundant.

Using the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English, Salena Sampson discusses “Adjective Comparison in Early Modern English: Variation across Genres in Public and Private Discourse” (306-322). Her quantitative analysis is itself interesting in that she can corroborate earlier assumptions that the use of inflectional or periphrastic forms is dependent on whether the adjective is used in the comparative (more inflectional) or the superlative grade (more periphrastic; cf. ch. 3.2). However, Sampson’s complementing her findings by a qualitative analysis, especially concerning periphrastic superlative uses in connection with high-ranking addressees, proves to be even more insightful.

Alice Spencer in “Etymology, Genealogy and Hagiographical *Auctoritas* in the Works of Osborn Bokenham: Redeeming the Public Voice of English Poetry” (323-343) suggests that Bokenham sought to “reclaim and redeem the public voice of English poetry” (p. 324), corrupted by none less than Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate in their aureate diction accessible only to a limited, highly literate audience. Spencer’s argumentation is admittedly indebted to Delany (1998), and while her discussion of individual aspects of Bokenham’s works is interesting and stimulating, the conclusiveness of her overall argument, I must admit, escapes me, perhaps because I cannot grasp exactly what “the public voice of English poetry” in the fifteenth century is.

In Eleonora Chiavetta’s essay “‘A simple and popular description’: Popularization of Natural Science in the *Natural History Rambles* of J.G. Wood” (344-358), communicative strategies and rhetorical devices employed by Wood are analysed. Although the article is mainly descriptive, it illustrates beautifully the ways in which scientific knowledge was made

digestible for a larger audience, in particular by employing a highly colloquial style, by addressing his readers directly and, very rare in scientific prose, by giving his own opinion.

“Gull’d by the enchanting Tongues of *Quack* and *Zany*’: The Rhetoric of Nostrum Marketing in Speech and Print in Early Modern London” (359-376) is the title of Roberta Mullini’s contribution. For her research of evaluative terms and features of oral communication, she compiled a corpus consisting of handbills and publications “by or about quacks and about the early modern marketing of medicines” (p. 361). In her material, Mullini manages to identify axiological communicative markers (e.g. *all* and *any*) and features of orality, though the latter are limited to one partly fictional source. In general, Mullini’s discussion of orality could profit, I think, from distinctions made in previous scholarship on the matter, such as the differentiation between “Verschriftung” (scripting) and “Verschriftlichung” (textualization; see for instance Ehler, Christine/ Schaefer, Ursula 1998. *Aspekte des Medienwechsels in verschiedenen Kulturen und Epochen: Eine Einleitung. Verschriftung und Verschriftlichung: Aspekte des Medienwechsels in verschiedenen Kulturen und Epochen*. Ed. Ehler/Schaefer. Tübingen: Narr, 1998: 1-9, here p. 4). Similarly, in evaluating emotional language in written discourse, Friedrich Ungerer’s “Emotions and Emotional Language in English and German News Stories” (*The Language of Emotions*. Ed. Niemeyer, S./ Dirven, R. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1997, 307-328) may have been useful. For lack of a detailed list of the sources she used in compiling her corpus, for which she partly relied on title pages, one may wonder about the criteria Mullini employed distinguishing “quack” publications from household books or other medical/pharmaceutical writings. Surely, Lanfranc of Milan’s (c.1250-1306) *Chirurgia magna* (1296, here used in a translation published 1565) is not the work of a quack, however outdated it may have been by the late sixteenth century. Moreover, I wonder whether the inclusion of further works would have shown that “quackspeak” is less specific in its affectivity than Mullini’s contribution suggests. For a random example I quote the title of one of the numerous publications by Nicholas Culpeper – perhaps the most prominent physician in 17<sup>th</sup>-century England (here London: N. Brooke, 1655; ESTC R22796):

Culpeper’s last legacy left and bequeathed to his dearest wife, for the publicke good, being the choicest and most profitable of those secrets which while he lived were lockt up in his breast, and resolved never to be publisht till after his death. Containing sundry admirable experiences in severall sciences, more especially, in chyrurgery and physick, viz. compounding of medicines, making of waters, syrrops, oyles, electuaries, conserves, salts, pils, purges, and trochischs. With two particular treatises; the one of feavers; the other of pestilence; as also other rare and choice aphorisms, fitted to the understanding of the meanest capacities. Never publisht before in any of his other works.

The book certainly contains a wealth of useful information and analysis, and the majority of contributions are highly stimulating. In particular the fact that in more than one case they include fields of knowledge well outside linguistics will contribute to further advances in historical pragmatics. Unfortunately, the volume suffers from numerous typos and problems in English usage, albeit distributed unevenly across the contributions. Suffice it to point out some (by page): 149: “thdvauncement”; 170: “/□/” [sic] read “/e/”; 250: uncapitalized “abstract” and “orientation”; 253, last par.: “these introductory formula” > “formulas”; 254, 2nd par.: “At the orientation structural level”; *ibid.*, 3rd par.: is round at the core narrative level; 265: “Subsequent to this, was ..... the according to Australia of Dominion status”; 268, n. 15: “Lowlandsas”; 270, quote: dash missing “Much of Australasian nomenclature is due to “the man in the bush” – more precise

address not recorded"; 271: "a more specific denotata" > denotate/denotatum; 314f.: dittography of "overlap ... of degree adjectives, at least"; 326: delete comma in "modesty, *topos*"; 329 and passim: Jacobus de Voragine's short name is "Jacobus", not the toponymous "Voragine"; 337: "Curiously"; 338 third and fourth paragraph: smaller font; 339, quote: "Homwe" > "Homer", "new" > "ner"; 364, quote: "Children" > "Children", "Culperer" > "Culpeper", etc.

---

**Nicola T. Owtram, 2010. *The Pragmatics of Academic Writing: A Relevance Approach to the Analysis of Research Article Introductions*. Bern: Peter Lang.**

*Annelie Ädel*  
*Stockholm University, Sweden*

---

The overall aim of this monograph is to answer two questions: (1) How are differences in textual practices to be analysed from a pragmatic point of view? and (2) What effects, if any, do textual practices have on the interpretation of the texts or discourses in which they occur? (p. 15). More specifically, the work involves an examination of "how a relevance theory approach can contribute to an understanding of cultural differences in academic writing through focusing on how assumptions and intentions come into play as communicators (writers and readers) create and understand text" (p. 18). By way of contextualisation, a review chapter is included which offers some historical background on discourse analysis and pragmatics (2.3); genre analysis (2.5); contrastive rhetoric (2.7); and stylistics (2.8), including discussion of notions such as reciprocity (2.4) and discourse community (2.6).

The starting point of the study is the observation, supported by a number of interviews with Italian academics required to publish in English, that academic writing in English and Italian differ in the use of five stylistic features: (1) paragraph length and structure; (2) length and construction of sentences; (3) organisation of information in sentences; (4) degree of formality of lexis; and (5) amount of nominalisation. The claim is that, compared to English, writing in Italian exhibits longer paragraphs that favour inductive structures; longer sentences; more subordination, with a tendency to have "information about the subject in pre-topic position by modifying the non-finite structure" (p. 14); more formal lexis; and more extensive use of nominalisations. To illustrate differences in the use of these stylistic features, excerpts from articles from two journals in the field of history are used: one in Italian and one in English, totalling approximately 120 lines of text. After the analysis of the excerpts (Chapter 1), the book introduces prescriptive approaches to academic writing, comparing a total of eight style guides in English and Italian (Chapter 3) mainly from the perspective of these five features. It is found that "no great differences in the advice given to English and Italian writers" (p. 89) appear.

An additional pair of text samples from the two languages is drawn on; these consist of introductions to research articles in political science (published in 1992). These introductions are used to illustrate the relative usefulness of five different "theoretical approaches and frameworks": (1) Halliday and Hasan's work on cohesion; (2) Rhetorical Structure Theory; (3) Swales' CARS analysis; (4) Gricean analysis; and (5) Relevance Theory. The first four are introduced and applied in Chapter 4, whose aim is "to explore to what extent four widely used models can help to provide functional explanations for stylistic choices and what areas remain in need of alternative explanations" (p. 95). The answer to the question of whether the approaches can shed light on the five stylistic features is that they "do not seem very

illuminating" (p. 150). Chapter 5 introduces Relevance Theory (RT), and Chapter 6 presents an RT account of the two text samples. Referring to notions such as processing effort and cognitive effect, the analysis is said to "show that relevance theory is well-suited to describing many culturally specific features of written discourse in Anglo-Saxon and Italian cultures and their effects on comprehension" (p. 254).

One of the main contributions of this work is in the explicit comparison of different approaches and their application to the same text samples. (With the notable exception of Mann and Thompson 1992, why do we find such useful comparisons mainly in textbooks for students?) That said, the selection of approaches does not seem altogether appropriate, in that these approaches represent very different rationales and scopes. To mention but one example, CARS analysis is specifically designed for the subgenre of research article introductions, while Gricean analysis is meant to apply to communication in general. Like Gricean analysis, RT, the approach of central interest here, is a general theory of communication. As such, it has made significant contributions to linguistics, so it is no doubt a worthwhile goal also to investigate what contributions it can make in a discourse-analytical context. The author shows that there are merits in applying RT to academic writing, but it is not quite clear what the relative merits of RT actually are, considering the fact that the five approaches compared are not on a par – especially in terms of their ability to explicate the five features in focus. Another uncertain issue concerns the actual explanatory power of 'processing effort' and 'cognitive effect'; no evidence is offered – say, from psycholinguistic testing – that processing and cognition work the way they are claimed to. This relates to a general piece of criticism of RT concerning how to test these qualities (see e.g. Wedgwood 2005: 50, who is sympathetic toward RT but still acknowledges this).

It is generally the case in this work that basic assumptions and findings are not given sufficient support. For example, it is not clear on what basis the very small number of text samples selected for analysis can be said to be "in many ways *representative of two academic traditions*" (p. 254; emphasis added). Furthermore, the traditions which the samples are claimed to represent – "Italian academic writing" and "academic writing in English" – are treated as monoliths. This suggests that cross-cultural differences are the only relevant factor for 'textual practices', which is reinforced by the fact that no discussion is offered of the role of discipline, genre or audience, despite the availability of much research demonstrating the importance of such factors (some of which is summarised in Swales 2004). Some of the claims made could have been tested empirically; for example, it would have been possible to provide generalised data on the five features – if not directly through the author's own investigation, then indirectly through mainstream corpus-based literature, such as Biber *et al.* (1999) in which academic writing is systematically compared to three other major registers in English.

This work covers many different areas – illustrated not least by the long list of references – and presents the reader with a wealth of information. However, connections between the various pieces of information are relatively scarce, resulting in a lack of coherence. A case in point is the lack of a concluding chapter tying the many different pieces together. Despite these shortcomings, many of which can be corrected in future work, this publication still represents an interesting attempt to analyse academic discourse from a new perspective.

## References

- Biber, D. / Johansson, S. / Leech, G. / Conrad, S. / Finegan, E. 1999. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London: Longman.
- Mann W.C. / Thompson, S. 1992. *Discourse Description: Diverse Analyses of a Fund Raising Text*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Swales, J. 2004. *Research Genres: Explorations and Applications*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Wedgwood, D. 2005. *Shifting the Focus: From Static Structures to the Dynamics of Interpretation*. Oxford: Elsevier.

---

**Maurizio Gotti and Christopher Williams (eds) 2010. *Legal Discourse across Languages and Cultures*. Bern: Peter Lang.**

**Risto Hiltunen**  
*University of Turku, Finland*

---

Few institutions are so deeply rooted in their socio-cultural context and depend so crucially on language as the law. Research into the complex interface of language and law has been pursued since the 1960s, mainly in an Anglo-American context. The present volume, edited by Maurizio Gotti and Christopher Williams, is one of the most recent contributions to explore the richness of the field of legal linguistics. The volume contains fourteen articles, originally presented at an international conference on intercultural perspectives on language and the law at the University of Bergamo in 2009. Each contribution addresses a specific linguistic topic in terms of the general cross-cultural theme. The languages featured in the primary data of the papers include Croatian, English, French and Norwegian. In most contributions English is either the target of the study or provides a point of comparison to another language being investigated. English is also examined in various regional and cultural contexts, including Britain, the United States, Australia and the European Union. Four papers address specific linguistic-legal issues in the context of the EU. Methodologically, the collection provides an eclectic array of discourse-based approaches as applied to a variety of intercultural contexts, with the treatment depending on the aims of the study. Context sensitivity is emphasized as an important interpretative condition for any reliable results, whether the method is qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of the two.

The editors have grouped the papers into two sections, with seven articles each. The first section, "Legal Discourse across Languages", deals with the realization of legal concepts in various European languages, while the second, "Legal Discourse across Cultures", consists of investigations concerned with links between law, language and culture in various Anglo-American legal settings. The division provides a helpful orientation for the reader. It will also be followed in the commentary below, but the order of the papers in the volume is not strictly followed.

Section I contains four studies by Croatian scholars. The volume opens with a paper by Susan Šarčević, addressing the feasibility of creating a pan-European (English) legal language on the basis of the so-called Common Frame of Reference (2004) and its follow-up, known as the Draft Common Frame of Reference (DCFR; 2008). These documents, instigated and endorsed by the EU Commission, are intended to lay down fundamental principles and provide standard definitions and model rules for a common legal language. The objective is regarded as particularly important for private law and contract law, where terminological

harmonization would significantly facilitate cross-border transactions. This pan-European legal language is not, however, intended to be a process of Anglification, introducing English concepts of Common Law. Rather, in creating a uniform European legal terminology priority is to be given to neutral terms and descriptive paraphrases in definitions: e.g. “non-contractual liability arising out of damage caused to another” for torts (delicts) (p. 34). Negotiating definitions acceptable to all stakeholders, whether British or Continental, is an ambitious project, involving, among other things, reconciling divergent views as to the scope and adequacy of the equivalence between traditional and innovative uses of terms. The future of “a trans-systemic instrument formulated in a meta-language [such as DCFR], which is intentionally detached from national legal languages” (p. 41), will necessarily take time to be implemented and will depend crucially on the successful integration of the many conflicting interests at stake. It will also entail a consistent follow-up of the renderings of the English base text in translations into the various official languages of the EU, with equally neutral vocabulary and syntactically simple sentence structures.

The next three Croatian contributions focus on the country’s linguistic situation from the point of view of foreign words, problems of translation, and the teaching of legal language. Lelija Sočanac deals with the transference of foreign cultures in the lexis of scholarly legal articles in Croatian. Her focus is on the major historical transition points in the country’s history since the 1950s. The data indicate the predominance of Latin as the donor language, with English coming second. The only exception consists of the data for 1991, where English items clearly outnumber Latin ones. This may be due to chance, however; in any case, no explanation is provided for the finding. The English words in Croatian texts are mostly instances of direct code-switching (e.g. *constitution*, *bill of lading*). German and French influences clearly play a secondary role in the data.

Martina Bajčić discusses the challenge of translating EU legislation into Croatian. Her examples indicate that the terminology of the EU *acquis* provides considerable problems for the translator, due to the absence of appropriate Croatian equivalents for many current EU terms. The author calls for a multidisciplinary approach “including cooperation between linguists and lawyers, and the use of expert terminology know-how when translating EU legislation” (p. 75). Providing systematic, standardized translations will be crucially important for the successful harmonization of any national legislation with that of EU.

Snježana Husinec is concerned with methods of teaching legal English to legal practitioners whose native language is Croatian. In this process – the author maintains – the teacher has to deal at the same time with grammatical difficulties, terminological conventions, and cultural differences between the legal systems concerned. One problem for the teacher is the fact that the Croatian law is largely modeled on German law and therefore very different from the English Common Law system. The paper argues for a content-based approach to teaching the language of the law and for comparative legal analysis as a useful method in bridging the gap between legal cultures and avoiding conceptual and terminological confusion arising from the asymmetry of the systems.

The article by Jan Roald and Sunniva Whittaker examines the verbalization of French and Norwegian legislative texts from a contrastive point of view. Like Bajčić, the authors are concerned with the transposition of the EU legislation into the national language of a country that is not a member state. The authors use a corpus of comparable texts, i.e. “texts that deal with the same subject matters, but are at the same time subject to national genre norms” (p. 95). The focus is on strategies employed in French and Norwegian for the expression of

concepts relating to legal persons in the field of public procurement. The material displays interesting linguistic and cultural differences, with respect for instance to text length and the amount of detail provided. The Norwegian text is more concise than the French one, indicating a correlation between the degree of elaboration and that of conceptual lexicalization; it also relies on well-established terms, while the French text prefers to coin new terms in the field in question (p. 103). Another notable difference is that the French text has a much higher incidence of “unfaithful anaphors”. This variation is seen as a cultural phenomenon and as part of a different rhetorical tradition. The Germanic tradition places greater emphasis on the avoidance of ambiguity, and therefore prefers lexical repetition to pronominal anaphoric reference even at the cost of stylistic elegance.

Pursuing phenomena of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparison, Silvia Cacchiani and Chiara Preite examine two English legal dictionaries and one French one, with similar target audiences, to find out how borrowings from French into English, and vice versa, are represented in the two lexicographic cultures. One of their findings is that the English dictionaries examined – the *Longman Dictionary of Law* and the *Oxford Dictionary of Law* – focus on disciplinary knowledge and include extensive encyclopedic information, in contrast with the French *Vocabulaire juridique*. The authors take this to be a reflection of different assumptions as to what will best satisfy the target users’ needs, as envisaged by the compilers of the dictionaries.

In the remaining article in Section I, Colin Robertson provides a highly informative review of the legal-linguistic revision process of EU legislation, in three contexts: a) that of the lawyer-linguists doing the work, (b) that of the legal-linguistic and cultural context within which their work takes place, and (c) that of the operational context of time, space and administrative realities bearing on the revision process. Based on personal experience, the account offers a diversified picture of the legal-linguistic dimensions of a work-force responsible for drawing up EU law and legal treaties in the 23 different national languages of the union. The author considers that the practical experience of lawyer-linguists could be combined more closely with linguistic research, so as to arrive at a better understanding of “what is going on and being done every time an EU legislative text is being drafted, translated, revised, published, transposed, and acted on” (p. 71).

Section II of the volume contains articles about English in various legal contexts, from different courts of law to different thematic issues. In an illuminating and informative article, based on a corpus of four House of Lords appellate judgments from 2004-2009, Ignacio Vázquez Orta explores the reasoning of the judges behind the decisions. The study makes use of Bakhtin’s notions of dialogism and heteroglossia, and builds on Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics, with *dialogue* and *negotiation* as central concepts. For the judges of appellate courts, arriving at a decision involves not only a process of negotiating alternative positions, but also negotiating with past decisions and integrating them into their own discourse. The phases of the process will be reflected in the text of the decisions. A crucial point in the process concerns the judge’s intersubjective positioning, i.e. the process of making a choice by acknowledging alternative positions and choosing one alternative over another.

The decision will enter into dialogue with the previous texts of the case, with possible future texts, and with other colleagues in the profession. The shared background is the common law system, where “competing versions of facts need to be negotiated, reconstructed and recontextualized along the litigation process” (p. 265). The real-life event behind a court

case involves successive stages of discursive reconstruction and recontextualization, until the judge is able to reach the verdict. The text of the verdict bears traces of the intervening discursive events, where the discourse of social reality is translated into that of legal discourse. The traces may be intertextual and interdiscursive, and may be expressed explicitly or implicitly, as the case may be.

Functionally, the structure of an appellate court judgment consists of (a) the facts, (b) the issue, (c) the argumentation (or reasoning), and (d) a conclusion. This arrangement also reflects the textual process and the dialogic nature of the documents. The analysis of the individual functional elements indicates for instance that *graduation* is an important resource for (c) in that it allows negotiating relevant legal issues, rules, categories, and precedent; it also makes it possible to frame legal issues as matters of degree, when external texts relating to the case are incorporated into the judge's own discourse. The final phase (d) is also a highly dialogic, involving intertextual positioning and dialogue with all previous discourse. In the light of the analysis, legal reasoning is seen as an exercise in intersubjective positioning and making choices, and as a valuable resource that provides the Common Law with the necessary flexibility it requires to be able to deal with new situations for which no previous authority exists.

Davide Mazzi also deals with argumentation in the judicial process by considering the occurrence of a specific linguistic feature, counterfactual conditionals (CFTs), in two corpora: an American one, consisting of judgments by the Supreme Court of the US, and a British one, consisting of judgments by the judicial panel of the House of Lords. The analyses are supplemented by a text-based qualitative study of two cases. CFTs are defined as "constructs occurring when you are talking about something that might have happened but did not happen" (p. 244). Counterfactuals are typically employed to express or criticize causation. Grammatically, they are usually signaled by *if*; in more formal contexts by '*had* + subject + past participle'. The construction is another manifestation of the dialogic dimension of legal language, as seen for instance in the expression of the judges' stance with regard to previous judicial opinions and judicial procedures adopted. The corpus analysis of the realizations of CFTs indicates that the pattern is closely linked to distinctive contexts of argumentation, where judges perform such key acts as reviewing previous judicial opinions, assessing relevant procedures, categorizing facts according to their relevance, and interpreting the objectives underlying the law.

The article by Giorgia Riboni takes up another specific perspective on courtroom discourse, asking how the figure of the 'terrorist' is constructed through legal language. *Terrorist* is a highly charged word emotionally, but difficult to define in precise terms. Riboni's data consist of decisions by the Supreme Court of the US and the European Court of Human Rights. The two courts play a somewhat different role. The US court implements American law and its decisions are final. The European court, on the other hand, relies on international law and has essentially a review function. Riboni makes use of discourse analysis and corpus analysis to analyze the contexts and uses of the word in the decisions of the two courts. The results reveal interesting cultural differences in the discursive construction of the concept. The American data portray 'terrorist' (and 'terrorism') as an alien threat, with 'attacks', 'acts', 'organization' as the most frequent collocates. The discursive identity of 'terrorist' appears to be ambiguous and the term can be applied to a wide variety of people. The author thinks that this ambiguity may be deliberate, considering the strategic view of terrorism as an external danger to the US and the so-called 'war on terrorism' that has been evoked in response to it.

The European court has a very different approach: rather than waging war, it tends focus on international cooperation and application of the law as tools against terrorism. The difference is seen as highlighting the fact the US has a more distinctive national character, while Europe is perceived as a single entity only at the institutional level.

Divergences in legal culture are also in focus in the article by William Bromwich. He examines the different shaping of discourse practices in three employment tribunals: the Employment Tribunals in the UK, the EU Civil Service Tribunal, and the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT). In the UK, the procedure follows the Common Law tradition and relies essentially on oral evidence from oral hearings, where examination and cross-examination are utilized as methods for testing the credibility of the plaintiff and the witnesses. No documentation of the hearing, whether taped or written, is made available to the public; the only way to access these data is to be physically present at the hearings. The other two settings follow the traditions of Civil Law, with an emphasis on written pleadings and documentary evidence. In these tribunals the documentation results in a genre chain of written communications, consisting in the case of the EU Civil Services Tribunal of application, defence, reply and rejoinder, in the case of the ILO Administrative Tribunal of complaint, reply, rejoinder and surrejoinder.

Janet Ainsworth deals with an ideological issue in the workplace in the light of the legal treatment in American courts of employers' 'English-only' policies. The issue here is that English-only policies are imposed on employees who have already been hired and have been deemed to possess an appropriate competence in the language. In most cases the jobs in question are low-skilled manual labour jobs, often in workplaces with a large number of workers whose first language is other than English. Such workers are often told that they must adhere to English alone in all communication in the workplace. The practice has become increasingly common in the US. Many of those dismissed from their jobs on such grounds feel that they have been discriminated against, and that the policy has been used as a pretext for racial or ethnic bias on the part of the employer. Appellate courts dealing with such claims have, however, tended to reject them. The author maintains that a negative ruling is inconsistent with the findings of linguistic studies of bilingual language use. A careful examination of the assumptions underlying the courts' reasoning is shown to be highly questionable or downright erroneous. The idea that monolingualism in the workplace is important for occupational safety is questionable, and the same applies to the assumption that the English-only rule will promote racial and ethnic harmony in the workplace. The evidence from relevant court cases does not support such motives; on the contrary, it points to increased racial and ethnic tensions and ethnic polarization in workplaces that have adopted the English-only policy.

Moving out of the courtroom, the remaining articles address a legal policy and a legal genre. Thomas Christiansen is concerned with the concept of property and land rights in the legal discourse relating to indigenous groups in Australia. Drawing on Langacker's idea of the relationship between possessed and possessor, the author examines certain key concepts behind Aboriginal land rights and the way they have been framed in Anglo-Australian legal lexis and syntax. The idea of Aboriginals as a uniform group of people with a uniform world view is an overgeneralization. The notion of possession is also conceptualized very differently in the two cultures, the Aboriginal people's view of the universe being "less individualistic, less anthropocentric" (p. 310). To find out more about the issue in legal discourse relating to Indigenous groups, the author has analyzed the occurrence of the relevant English words (e.g.

*land, community, property, ownership, possession, tenure*) in two corpora of texts addressing the same question. The Australian data, derived from articles in the *Indigenous Law Bulletin* (ILB), are compared to corresponding data in the *Harvard Law Review* (HLR), representing more general discourse. The patterns of lexical clusters reveal that many items have a more restricted range of collocates and a more specialized set of meanings in the ILB than in the HLR, indicating “radically different conceptualizations” (p. 310) of the property rights of Aboriginal peoples. Such a gap provides a considerable challenge to legislators, who will need to find a balance between the two conceptual systems.

In the final essay of the volume, Ismael Arinas Pellón offers an analysis of the communicative goals of American patent texts in a corpus of 333 samples of the “utility” type, with special reference to their combination of technical and juridical features. Patent texts typically have a fixed structure and employ a highly formulaic language. They need to be carefully constructed so as to be persuasive and convincing, particularly in terms of the technical information conveying the novelty and adequacy of the invention, while at the same time revealing as few details as possible about the discovery as long as the patent-granting process is still in progress. Such conflicting real-life motives will be reflected in various ways in the communicative strategies and organization of the texts. The analysis of linguistic variations in the verbal patterns of the moves – a preamble, followed by a description of technical scope, novelty, limitations and technical characteristics, and a closing formula – provides telling examples of the communicative goals of the documents.

The editors are to be congratulated on having produced a stimulating collection of readings, with a rich assortment of topical issues concerning legal discourse in different linguistic contexts and cultural settings. The corpora of materials range from courtroom documents to instances of individual genres, the methodologies from discourse analysis to lexical and syntactic studies, with the cultural interface as an overarching common denominator. The volume as a whole provides valuable insights into the complex interaction of language, law and culture, at the national, international and global level.

---

**Ken Beatty, 2010. *Teaching and Researching Computer-Assisted Language Learning*. London: Longman-Pearson.**

*Iman M. Laversuch*  
*University of Cologne, Germany*

---

The latest in the Longman series, *Applied Linguistics in Action*, this book takes on the onerous task of tracking the most recent developments in computer-assisted language learning (CALL). As the author acknowledges, what makes this task particularly arduous is the unparalleled speed with which computer innovations hit the market, making even the most timely publication all but obsolete. This second edition admirably rises to this challenge. It is an intelligently written, highly informative resource which describes not only the current state of the art, but also many of the most intriguing developments on the horizon.

Before diving into the subject, however, the author takes time to introduce the reader to the labyrinth of terminology which has saturated the field. This introduction is followed by extremely detailed yet engaging historical account of CALL. Thankfully, this account is not limited to advances made in English language instruction. It also offers information about CALL programs for other languages (e.g. *À la recontre de Phillipe* and *No Recuerdos* for French

and Spanish respectively). Driving the proliferation of many such innovations have been the military and private industry both of which have pumped exorbitant amounts of money into the development of CALL technology. However, as Beatty shrewdly points out, this investiture has often come at a high price: "Although computer software manufacturers may consult educators, most word-processing programs and other application are designed not for school use, with attendant pedagogical concerns, but for business environments where learning is less important, or even completely unimportant." (59). By drawing attention to this fact, Beatty successfully highlights the critical need for the increased involvement of educators and researchers in the development of future CALL resources.

Section II addresses one of the most enduring barriers to this collaboration: the continued skepticism and, at times outright hostility, with which many in education currently view CALL technology. As Beatty explains, this cynicism is not entirely without justification. Initially excited by the hyperbolic promises of CALL program developers, many school and university administrators initially invested heavily in the construction of CALL laboratories, only to discover that within a few years their once state-of-the-art equipment had become hopelessly antiquated. Once burned, twice shy, many of these one-time enthusiasts eventually became entirely unwilling to re-invest in what Beatty has cleverly nicknamed the "bleeding edge", i.e. the seemingly never-ending "cost of buying the latest hardware and software" (80). However, resistance to CALL is not only to be found among school administrators. Many teachers are also less than enthusiastic, bristling at predictions that CALL technology will eventually make human teachers obsolete. To an outsider, such concerns may sound like an acute case of paranoia. However, when one stops to think about just how many industries have had their human workforce replaced by computers in the last two decades, these fears become more justified. After all, unlike humans, computers never go on strike, take sick leave, or demand more pay; and when they burn out, they can be easily replaced with newer more "user-friendly" models. However, as yet, no one has been able to design a computer which can replace human teachers in the language classroom. Accordingly, Beatty concludes that, the most appropriate "role of CALL is to help foster language learning by creating conditions that make some aspects of language learning easier." (146).

How precisely CALL technology might ease the language instructor's task is sadly, however, almost entirely left to the imagination of the reader. Indeed, one of the primary criticisms of this work is that it does not spend nearly enough time describing the exact advantages (and disadvantages) of CALL for the language teacher. Instead the focus of the book remains rather rigidly focussed on the possible benefits for the language learner. One reason for this myopia may be the author's pragmatism. Regardless of what teachers may think about them, computers have become a stable, even essential part of young people's lives. Consequently, Beatty asserts that the only reasonable reaction for the responsible educator is to add computer literacy to the traditional 3R's of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Importantly, Beatty is careful to stress that "computers, software and WWW-based services are not seen solely as a positive agents of change in the classroom" (159). At the end of chapter 8, "Theoretical and Pedagogical Concerns" (159-183), some of the challenges which can come from using CALL technology (e.g. copyright violations; viruses; pornography; profanity; and cyberbullying) are discussed. Although this discussion is certainly appreciated, given the increasing prevalence and gravity of such abuse, it is regrettable that this edition only devotes 6 pages to these dangers. A serious recommendation for a subsequent edition would be an entire chapter on the dangers of CALL for *both* learners *and* teachers.

Another recommendation for future editions would be a revision of chapter 5, "Second-Language Acquisition and models of instruction" (85-107). As it stands now, this chapter offers a disappointingly superficial and largely outdated description of second language acquisition research. The vast majority of sources in this chapter are from the 1980s and earlier. This fact would seem to indicate that not enough time was taken to update this section since the publication of the first edition nearly a decade ago. Obviously before any credible model of CALL could be attempted, this latest research would need to be taken into account. For all of these shortcomings, the work quickly redeems itself in the final two sections. For example, in Chapter 10 of Section III, Beatty elegantly and effectively outlines the different approaches in CALL research, taking care to explain both potentially difficult terminology and key methodological concepts (e.g. theme, aim, procedure, analysis, reporting results). Another highlight comes in Section IV (235-251). Here readers will find an outstanding set of resources. In the final analysis, the work was found to be a valuable resource, as Beatty suggests, for all those interested in "the ideal possibilities of CALL, and the ways in which it can make the teaching and learning of language as unobtrusive, effective and enjoyable as possible."(234).

---

**Jennifer Wawrzinek, 2008. *Ambiguous Subjects. Dissolution and Metamorphosis in the Postmodern Sublime*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.**

*Jessica Aliaga Lavrijsen*  
*University of Zaragoza, Spain*

---

The notion of the sublime, like its overwhelming feeling, has been a key human interest, as many thinkers have written on the concept since Longinus' *Peri hýpsous*. It could be argued that the sublime has its own historical evolution as a concept: from Burke's *Enquiry* and Kant's "Analytic", to the Romantic sublime, and later, the postmodern sublimes of Derrida, Lyotard, Lacan, Žižek or Nancy. The interest in this notion has not decreased in the last decades, as our concern with the (re)definitions of self - or rather we should say selves - and other(s), and with the nature of borders and boundaries, is more active than ever. In the globalised and changing culture we are presently immersed in, a book on *Ambiguous Subjects* seems to be essential reading, as Jennifer Wawrzinek's book highlights certain crucial issues that are inherently associated with twentieth-century identitarian re-configurations.

Jennifer Wawrzinek is a creative writer and literary critic interested in the margins/limits of identity and fiction. In *Ambiguous Subjects*, readers are offered an analysis of the more traditional concepts of the sublime, as well as a profound study of the very nature of the postmodern sublime, which is revealed as a complex and mutable element whose importance can enlighten many contemporary texts beyond the ones proposed for her analysis. The study is structured in an introduction, four theoretical and analytical chapters, and a conclusion, all interwoven with some astonishing poems, which enlarge and illustrate/question the articulation and meaning of the printed words: "With every mistake / I erase myself / Only to find you there / Beneath my alphabet tongue" (49). In these lines, where language seems to crack, the reader finds himself or herself into a sublime space of reading, "a space where one hears an undefinable *Ungeräusch*" (13), transcending the boundaries of academic writing and opening a field for creation and dialogue.

Wawrzinek first deconstructs the concept of the sublime as a product of traditional masculine and imperialist modes of experience, which follow a Unitarian and monologic definition of the self. According to the author, these traditional forms of the sublime (re)instate the hierarchical - and often gendered and racial - ordering of mind over body and self over other (2008: 14). This structuring would lead the subject to define himself or herself as a self-enclosed and independent entity, in strict opposition to the other(s) through violent negation, suppression, colonisation and appropriation. Examples of this would be British imperial expansion, German idealism and the holocaust, nuclear arming, Space Age technology and present-day immigration debates, among others. Under this light, the sublime is unveiled as a (dangerous) political strategy of power and domination.

In contrast, the postmodern sublime, which has a performative and relational basis, "would emphasise the encounter with sublime excess as an engagement and relation with an other, rather than as agonistic struggle" (51). The grotesque and the sublime cease, thus, to be oppositional, as the vertical hierarchical axis has become a mutable rhizomatic structure. Therefore, the dialogic nature of the postmodern sublime carries liberatory possibilities for the self and ethical responsibility towards others. Wawrzinek analyses then some contemporary texts that evoke this new sublime that is multidimensional, hybrid and plural, rather than vertical and singular (29). She examines Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, one of the first texts that critiques "the structures of domination inherent to traditional models of the sublime" (39), as "its transcendence is always coupled with the possibility of a fall, a descent into the chaos and corporeality from which subjects have divided themselves" (42). Other examples include Nicole Brossard's *Le Désert mauve*, Morgan Yasbinček's *liv* and the political theatre of the Women's Circus.

The chapter devoted to Brossard's novel (Ch. 2) exposes Maude Laures' act of translation and metamorphosis in *Mauve l'horizon* - the third section in the novel - as an "erotic surrender", "an amalgam of sensual immediacy and visual awareness that respects the radicality and unknowability of the other", a "reading one *through* the other" (62). The next chapter focuses on the possibilities of a formulation of the contingent/hybrid subject who refuses the singular transcendent subject, and "who is always, necessarily, on the point of becoming other" (109). "When I'm Up There It Feels Like Heaven", the fourth chapter in the book explores the potential of the Women's Circus, established in Melbourne to provide women who are survivors of sexual assault with a means of self-affirmation through the performance of their own stories (113). Their acrobatics, she explains, explore "the possibility of a horizontal and embodied sublime that allows the individual to rise from and return to the collective" (116).

The different postmodern sublimines explored by these texts emphasise the dialogic relation between self and world, self and other(s), creating a space for new meanings. This dialogic and ethical relation between self and other(s) allows for the coexistence of multiplicity and differences. Therefore, the interpretation of the texts examined in *Ambiguous Subjects* proposes a new notion of politics which is not grounded on the subject's visibility and autonomy, but rather on its potentiality and openness to the world, inviting to further (trans)mutations and ethical relations with Other(s). Wawrzinek's brilliant study could be very useful for critics interested in feminist, postcolonial, and trauma studies, as well as in non-literary fields such as philosophy, ethics, social and political studies. Besides, her writing is a breath of fresh air for the creative reader who may seek for a correspondence between a study's form and its content.

**Kerstin Knopf, 2008. *Decolonizing the Lens of Power. Indigenous Films in North America*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.**

*Judit Mudriczki*

*Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary*

---

While the discussion of Native American Literature has already become permanently present in academic circles as well as at conferences and institutions of higher education both in Europe and overseas, filmic representations of any form of Indigenous culture usually attract little attention. However, Kerstin Knopf's well-researched and convincingly argued monograph provides a ground-breaking attempt to explore this neglected field with an interdisciplinary approach.

The proper theoretical framework for this challenging endeavor emerges from the combination of the main concepts and terminology of postcolonial, Indigenous and film studies and perfectly complies with the hybrid nature of the film corpus the book analyzes. Transforming the Foucauldian idea of the "gaze of power", the author regards these films as the audiovisual means by which Indigenous artists could influence the images and stereotypes that Western media discourses have established, an idea to which the title of the book alludes. Although Kerstin Knopf's style is refined and comprehensible, this book is not intended for a wide audience but rather for an academic readership. One of the admirable qualities of the book is the meticulously consistent and sophisticated use of terminology, which manifests itself for instance in the use of the word "Indigenous", that signifies the original inhabitants and their descendents in Canada and the USA without bearing any political or derogative connotations. The thorough bibliography, filmography and glossary of cinematic terms also show both the professional background and the reader-friendly attitude of the author.

Although the book does not intend to provide a comprehensive overview, the film corpus on which it is based embraces the representatives of three distinct genres of American and Canadian productions. Kerstin Knopf does not explain her choice of films but the main thread of thought in the book follows a chronological pattern that also becomes artistically more and more complex, which gives the reader an impression of the diversity of Indigenous filmmaking. Unfortunately, most of the films are not easily accessible, which might hinder the reader's comprehension of the topic yet it does not detract from the merit of the author, who compensates for this difficulty by providing an appendix with sequence protocols and detailed shot analyses as well as color stills as illustrations in the Figures section.

After the theoretical and methodological introduction, a separate chapter is devoted to the study of how oral tradition is transformed into electronic narration devoting special attention to the use of language. The two documentaries analyzed in detail, *The Road Allowance People* by Maria Campbell and *Itam Hakim, Hopiit* by Victor Masayesva, were both made in the 1980s. The first records the Métis tradition of storytelling by employing a special, culture-specific dialect of English, while the latter preserves the Hopi narrative voice but also provides English subtitles.

The next chapter analyzes three short films from the 1990s, *Talker* by Lloyd Martell, *Tenacity* by Chris Eyre and *Overweight with Crooked Teeth* by Shelley Niro. These productions of 9-13 minutes in length epitomize what the author calls the "decolonizing strategies" of

Indigenous filmmakers and the way colonial practices and power relations appear on the screen. Based on a Cree myth, *Talker* thematizes the silencing of Indigenous voices; *Tenacity* shows the tension between the colonizer and the colonized within the setting of a hit-and-run accident; and *Overweight with Crooked Teeth* provides an ironic representation of the most common Indian stereotypes that exist in Western discourse.

Gradually extending her scope to more complex filmic discourses, the last chapter focuses on four dramatic films made between 1998 and 2001: *Honey Moccasin* by Shelly Niro, *Smoke Signals* by Chris Eyre, the mini-series *Big Bear* by Gil Cardinal and *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* by Zacharias Kunuk. Regarding the wider scope of cinematic traditions, the book also argues for a dynamic relation between Western filmic conventions and their Indigenous use. *Honey Moccasin*, an all-Indigenous production, offers a parody of detective stories with its main character, Honey, searching for lost powwow outfits. Perhaps the most widely-known film discussed in the book is *Smoke Signals*, which on the whole exemplifies the Indigenous realization of the road movie-genre but, on the other hand, enters into a cinematic dialogue with Hollywood films like *Dances with Wolves* or *The Last of the Mohicans* that already set a media discourse for Indian characters. The Canadian television series, *Big Bear*, is in fact an adaptation of Ruby Wiebe's 1973 novel on the life of the Cree chief Big Bear and the nineteenth century history of Canadian-tribal relations. In this case not only did the makers of the film lay special emphasis on historical accuracy but they also invented an unprecedented linguistic solution for the representation of the communication gap between colonizers and colonized. Completely subverting traditional cinematic conventions, this film assigns standard English to the Cree characters while the Canadians speak an incomprehensible language. The last film the author discusses is an Inuit production shot in the Arctic retelling the ancient legend from an Indian point of view and thus entering into a cinematic dialogue with Robert Flaherty's 1922 documentary, *Nanook of the North*. Compared to the other films discussed earlier in the book, Kerstin Knopf ultimately finds cinematic success in *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, which represents the Arctic landscape with its diversely distinct white shades of snow and ice.

---

Jefferson Holdridge, 2008. *The Poetry of Paul Muldoon*. Dublin: The Liffey Press.

Marc C. Conner

Washington & Lee University, United States

---

In the near-forty years that he has been publishing poetry, Paul Muldoon has attained a place as one of the more idiosyncratic, though certainly one of the more important, poets of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Jefferson Holdridge, in this informative, detailed, and richly insightful study, makes a strong case for Muldoon's standing as a major poet of his time. Though Holdridge modestly claims that his study merely "is meant to provide an introductory critical perspective" (1) on Muldoon, in fact the book goes beyond this, exploring all of Muldoon's published work (up to the 2006 volume *Horse Latitudes*) from a variety of viewpoints and allowing the poems to speak in and through themselves while also showing the many approaches that gain purchase on Muldoon's work. The result is a strong reading of Muldoon that, while appropriate for a relative newcomer to the poetry, will also take a place alongside the few other book-length studies that are trying to locate Muldoon's meaning and importance during his lifetime.

In the brief but careful introduction to the book, Holdridge sets out the range of approaches his study will employ – “formal, historical, etymological” – and, we might add, biographical, eco-critical, and genetic – and argues for a two-pronged approach to the poet’s work. One approach grapples with Muldoon’s postmodern sense of play, satire, and suspicion, and the other engages what Holdridge describes as Muldoon’s “traditionally romantic vision of the redemptive possibilities of art” (4, 6). This is a useful method, one that generates a series of contraries that are helpful in containing all the different things Muldoon’s poetry attempts. The reader who seeks a high modernist seriousness in Muldoon will soon be frustrated; yet the reader who wants only postmodern skepticism will stumble over lines such as these, from Muldoon’s poetic translation of Valéry:

should the wizened gold of your skin  
give way to pressure from within  
and explode in red juice-gems,  
that light-shedding fracture  
might bring a soul such as I had to dream  
of its own hidden architecture. (157)

Holdridge skillfully brings into relief the influences of other poets on Muldoon’s work, showing how Muldoon responds to and re-reads such figures as Louis MacNeice, W.H. Auden, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, and, of course, Yeats. Rather conspicuously absent is any sustained comparison to Seamus Heaney, Muldoon’s fellow Northern Ireland poet and one who has certainly resisted the lure of the satiric postmodern pose more strenuously than has Muldoon. Holdridge does suggest that Muldoon and Heaney share an interest in writing the landscape and immersing their own family histories into the land in ways that show their common bond as specifically Irish poets (195). Muldoon’s insistence that in this 21<sup>st</sup>-century world “very little is as it seems” (1) certainly indicates his reluctance to support high modernist claims for art’s importance and near-sacred status. Yet, particularly in his moving elegies on his mother’s death and the deaths of friends such as Mary Powers, Muldoon reveals his faith at least in art’s power to express suffering. To Holdridge, such poems indicate the poet’s belief in “aesthetic illumination,” as well as his sense of art’s “redemptive capacity” (119).

Holdridge is especially good at showing how Muldoon’s individual poems can illuminate particularly pressing issues in society, culture, and philosophy—put differently, Holdridge is a gifted close reader who also has a keen sense of the overarching issues that any poet gestures towards, enabling him to show that “though Muldoon’s poems are universal in significance, they are also local in character”(193). This seems to give an understanding of Muldoon’s penchant for satire of a Swiftian mode: like Swift, Muldoon seeks to “create fables of social and political experience that uncover dark truths of human nature” (193). In these more overtly politicized poems, such as those collected in *The Annals of Chile* (1994), Muldoon shows his heritage as a Northern Ireland poet-in-exile, all too aware of the imperial relations that have shaped his destiny and that of his world. As Holdridge states, “Muldoon is caught between New and Old World colonies, wondering where he fits” (135).

Holdridge’s strength in this volume rests in his ability to explicate Muldoon’s often-elusive lyrics without leveling their meaning, reducing their scope, or over-simplifying their structures. For this reader, I am still unresolved if Muldoon is indeed a major poet or is more of a (pyro-) technician, dazzling readers with his poetic acumen but ultimately failing to

resolve his bag of tricks into a satisfying poetic expression. But Holdridge claims that his own pleasure in Muldoon comes not from the clever jokes and surface skill, but rather from “Muldoon’s bitter snarl behind his laugh, a certain tragic insistence that makes him to want to escape into poetry and makes him first disgruntled with poetry for not really offering an escape and, secondly, with himself for wanting to escape into the aesthetic at all” (155). This is an appealing view of a difficult and at times off-putting poet. Holdridge makes a good case for Muldoon’s standing as a poet who matches the complexity and uncertainty of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a poetic project that is equally uncertain, but nevertheless vibrant and generative in its wit, its delight in the possibilities of language, and its ongoing effort to find meanings in the world. Certainly any reader who finds Muldoon’s work compelling will find much to interest and move in this excellent book.

---

Andrew Tate, 2008. *Contemporary Fiction and Christianity*. New York: Continuum.

Eoghan Smith  
Carlow College, Ireland

---

If progressive modernity can be partly characterized as the struggle of materialist historicism to overcome anti-rationalist transcendent faith, then this work by Andrew Tate makes apparent that contemporary fiction is shot through with the shocks of that battle. Since stadial versions of progress have increasingly lost credibility as models of the experience of modernity, it is unsurprising that religious sentiment not only continues to maintain a presence in cultural output, having been translated into forms that reflect resistance to the rationalist projects that would seek to abolish it. If this is a distressing thought to the hardest of hard-nosed materialists, then Tate’s convincing *Contemporary Fiction and Christianity* will do little to alleviate the pain.

For even though the issue is never fully addressed by Tate, implicit in the critical terms of this book is the persistent and hidden relation between the aestheticization of experience and religious feeling. Such a problem may seem confined to the relative unimportance of theosophical seminars, but Tate’s work implies religious sentiment is still an underlying, if uncomfortable, feature of contemporary culture. As Terry Eagleton has observed, and as remarked on by Tate, modernity simply replaced the Truth of God with the more measurable divinities of the human and natural sciences; new faiths certainly, but faiths nonetheless. The ultimate artistic expression of this new faith in human divinity was exhibited in the headiest excesses of the Romantic imagination. But where Wordsworth and Shelley once held that art was not just a simulation of transcendence, but a route into it, nowadays such grand claims appear to the diffident artist an historical embarrassment of human vanity. In a culture that makes an exhibition of its impotence, our current era – postmodernity – is intolerant of the lexicon of authenticity that inhabits all forms of metaphysics. How, then, can the contemporary novel adequately deal with religion – and Christianity, the most unfashionable religion at that – without making a mockery of itself?

There has, on the flip side, been no shortage of cultural texts that make a mockery of Christianity. Is Christianity, then, a sort of shame that is to be expunged? Hinting at a latent religious guilt that inhabits Western culture, Tate queries why “a ‘secret’ desire for faith in the transcendent appear[s] to fixate the postmodern literary imagination”. His target here is

fiction itself: why and how does contemporary writing respond to the “spectral force” of Christianity.

From the outset Tate makes no apologies for the Christian perspective he brings to the book, yet the same hesitancy he detects in many of the writers explored here is a feature of his work. He is cautious enough to state that he “recognizes that religious thinking is not the sole preserve of reactionary fanatics” and laments the fact that it is “easier to simplify matters of faith than to acknowledge ambivalences, differences and uncertainties”. He is undoubtedly correct here that the discourse of religion has been absurdly portrayed in many circles as a refuge for unthinking fundamentalists. There is no proselytising agenda at work here, and the book maintains for the most part critical objectivity within its given parameters. At the same time, however, the corollary of this is that we can be sure that Tate will stand within the shifting boundaries of those ambivalences, differences and certainties. There will be no extended discussion on the legitimacy of Christianity itself, either as an historical or theological occurrence, only how the religion has maintained its presence under the most extreme pressure from secularization.

That pressure, according to Tate, has abated somewhat with the “sacred turn” in a world that has gone through the secularizing process. Yet this does not suggest the strident return of religion after the failure of secularization. Instead, religious feeling has been translated into new forms. The novel itself is a vital component in the new re-spiritualization of contemporary culture, arising from the fact that while there has been a decline in public participation in the institutions of Christianity, there nonetheless remains a latent need for God. But if the defining characteristic of postmodernity is the fluidity of definition and the cross-fertilization of forms of belief, then “the relationship between the categories of the sacred and the secular”, Tate affirms, “is far less secure than believers or sceptics sometimes claim”.

*Contemporary Fiction and Christianity* is structured in a reasonably user-friendly way. There are five main sections dealing primarily with works, among others, by Jim Crace, John Updike, Don DeLillo, John Irving and Douglas Coupland. Some of these writers, like Crace, are avowedly atheistic. Some, like Updike, are haunted by a Puritan heritage. Yet they are bonded not by their commonality, Tate suggests, but by their appreciable fascination with the religious. Each of them, in their own way, has something to tell us about the status of Christianity in our culture. Each chapter is further subdivided into sections, which are often uneven in length, some lasting a page or two, with others lasting several. There is no ostensible rationale offered for these differing lengths, or why some sections deserve fuller treatment than others. Nevertheless, there is an impressive display of knowledge here, as Tate builds into the narrative of his chapters a sizeable amount of references to both fictional and critical texts. There are advantages and disadvantages to such an approach. While the reader remains utterly confident of Tate’s expertise and adept handling of a wide-ranging array of critical disciplines, there are times when the author’s own voice is smothered, if not silenced. Whole paragraphs are often a collage of quotations from other critics, with the result that context and development of key ideas are sacrificed for sonorous effect. But this is a book that is keen to assert the deep penetration of religious thought into contemporary fiction, and so if Tate’s own critical voice is frequently lost in a polyphonic multitude, the reader is assured of both the quality of research, the strength of critical thinking, and the conviction of the underlying arguments.

*Contemporary Fiction and Christianity* is concerned more with fiction's representation of and relationship with Christianity than with an analysis of the materiality of the culture that has brought us to this point. In this regard, Tate's analysis falls somewhat short of dealing with the politics of these novels, in favour of teasing out their theological semiotics. Almost all of the works under examination here are either British or American. Allowing that Tate is legitimately dealing only with Anglophone fiction, there could possibly have been room for a discussion of Catholicism in contemporary Irish writing, for example, or the collision of Christianity with native cultures in other post-colonial societies (Salman Rushdie and Yann Martel get fleeting mentions only). Women writers, and their perspective on what is, after all, a patriarchal religion, are notably few. These criticisms aside, this is a timely, astute and objective work in an area that has many potential pitfalls. In spite of claims that religion has ceased to have epistemological relevance in Western culture, Tate has traced with admirable sensitivity and a calm perspective the strong influence that Christianity still maintains in the imagination of the contemporary novelist.

---

**Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck (eds) 2009. *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, Volume 1, 1929–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.**

*Onno Kusters*  
*Utrecht University, the Netherlands*

---

On 26 July 1936, Samuel Beckett wrote to Thomas McGreevy: "I do not feel like spending the rest of my life writing books that no one will read. It is not as though I wanted to write them" (363). Seldom has the author expressed his now famous adage about artistic expression in a more personal way. ("The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express", in "Tal Coat", *Disjecta*, p. 139) It is one of the great feats of this first volume of Beckett's letters: we see the artist as a young *man*, trying to find out what he wants to do (which is not necessarily writing; at one point he suggests that it would make more sense to become a commercial pilot – provided he's not "too old to take it up seriously, nor to stupid about machines to qualify"), without abstracting his quest into the profound one-liners that he worked so hard on to perfect in later years. We also get to know Beckett's literary likes and dislikes, for instance, in nicely disrespectful epistolary outbursts. "I have been reading wildly all over the place. Goethe's *Iphigenia* & then Racine to remove the taste" (324); D.H. Lawrence offers merely a "tedious kindling of damp" (217-18). But there is much more to relish in this beautifully produced tome.

This edition of the first volume of Samuel Beckett's *Letters*, covering the years 1929-1940, has been hailed all-round as a major achievement, and a treasure for scholars and non-academic lovers of Beckett's writing alike. "The editorial work behind this project has been immense in scale. Every book that Beckett mentions, every painting, every piece of music is tracked down and accounted for. His movements are traced from week to week. [...] When he writes in a foreign language, we are given both the original and an English translation (save for some French verse that is left untranslated – a puzzling editorial decision)" (J.M. Coetzee). Seamus Heaney's "most bracing read" of 2009 was also the collection, "a portrait of the Dubliner as a young European with a hard gemlike gift for language, learning and mockery." Gabriel Josipovici, finally, argues that what needs to be done now is "the other three volumes

to appear as quickly as possible and then for CUP to issue a selection of the most interesting letters, with absolutely minimum annotation, in a one-volume paperback. Because, be in no doubt about it, if *Godot* and *Molloy* lit up the dreary landscape of writing in the immediate post-war era, these letters are set to do same for the new century". More reviews can be viewed on Cambridge UP's website.

The scale of the project is nicely illustrated by the Contents page, which offers, apart from the letters themselves (669 pages, including extensive notes) the following entries: a List of illustrations; a General introduction; the French translator's preface (with a most interesting passage on the adequate translation of the French swearwords); the German translator's preface; Editorial procedures; Acknowledgements; Permissions; a List of abbreviations; an Introduction to Volume I; an Appendix; Profiles; a Bibliography of works cited; an Index of recipients<sup>5</sup> and, finally, a General Index. In all, this edition, winner of the Choice Outstanding Academic Title 2009, is a major event in the history of publishing ego-documents. Beckett's stipulation that only passages from letters "having bearing on my work" could be published will have caused problems, but as the author himself assured editor Martha Fehsenfeld, "I am relieved at the thought of its being in such devoted and capable hands as yours" (xiv). The stipulation itself provided grounds for discussion, as we can easily image, and a vivid account of the difficulties arising from the various interpretations of it are part of the General introduction. And so is an account of "Locating and transcribing the letters", of "The principles of selection (which were "formed and tested, then re-formed, re-tested, and re-applied", xxi); of the languages Beckett wrote in; the editorial principles; the forms of annotation; a justification of the four volumes and, how Beckettian, an account of the Lacunae.

One example from the introduction of the difficulties encountered must suffice here: the editors devote a whole paragraph to the quality of the letters and the legibility of Beckett's handwriting. "One manuscript specialist proffered what was for the editors the less-than-encouraging opinion that Beckett had the worst handwriting of any twentieth-century author. The letters themselves provide ironic commentary: 'Don't suppose you can read this but can't face the machine [his typewriter]'" (xii).

Among the recipients of the letters are the Russian director Sergei Eisenstein (whom the young Beckett asks "to be considered for admission to the Moscow State School of Cinematography", 317), the Dutch painter and life-long friend of Beckett Bram van Velde, and of course Axel Kaun, recipient of the "German letter" published in *Disjecta* (1983). The letter famously sets out to explain the author's attitude to language and writing, or more in particular, to the English language and writing in it, telling Kaun that "[i]t is indeed getting more and more difficult, even pointless, for me to write in formal English. And more and more my language appears to me like a veil which one has to tear apart in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it" (519). For James Joyce's work Beckett comes up with the nicely profitable term "apotheosis of the word", and for his own project the "very desirable literature of the non-word" (520).<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> One of the few minor errors there: the third letter to Joyce in the collection appears on p. 675, not 673 (in a footnote to his review, Coetzee lists two similarly minor errors – the lack of faults detected by reviewers is indicative of the impressive quality of the edition).

<sup>6</sup> Another editorial error here: Kaun's letter is indexed as p. 683; the German original starts, in fact, on p. 512.

At least two other recipients must be mentioned here: the Irish poet Thomas McGreevy and James Joyce. Introduced to McGreevy by his former professor at Trinity College Dublin, Thomas Rudmose-Brown, Beckett took over from McGreevy as Lecteur d'Anglais at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris in November 1928. It was to prove a turning point in Beckett's career. McGreevy introduced Beckett to Joyce, Joyce suggested a topic for his young compatriot's contribution to *Our Exagmination*, the early one-volume exegesis of *Work in Progress*, and the rest is history. The largest number of letters in this volume is to McGreevy, whom, when artistically constipated, so to speak, Beckett inundates with plastic references to the body as the source and target of all art. As the editors explain in the introduction to the volume, "[i]f art hits, and must hit, the body, this is because it must emerge from the body to begin with, if it is to be necessary" (xciv). An astounding range of bodily-linguistic items crop up in a great number of letters to McGreevy: Beckett's poems are blessed as "a double-yoked orgasm in months of aspermetic nights & days" (87); Jacob Bronowski, editor of *The European Caravan* is said to be using "three turds from my central lavatory. But alas not the twice round and pointed ones" (42-43). I read the letters and wept— with laughter, mostly, but also with a new sense of the importance of the physical, the bodily in the work of an artist who is often seen as the highest-falutin' of them all. As the editors rightly argue, "[t]he scatology may contain an undergraduate's jocularly, but that it is no mere joke, still less any mere trope, is clear even without recourse to Beckett's *oeuvre*" (xcv). Apart from this, we find brilliant, obstinate, at times icy writing to enjoy in many of the letters. When confronted by an unfavourable review of his poems by Michael Roberts, Beckett wrote to his friend the poet, editor and translator George Reavey: "Geheimrat Roberts is sublime. Would he care to appoint a time do you think for me to bend over. Poets' bottoms are so very much the same" (322).

The three letters from Beckett to Joyce included in this volume are a bit of a disappointment. They offer information and express gratitude in polite phrases that fail to reveal much about the two men's personal relationship. The relatively muted nature of these epistles is, obviously, the result of Beckett's stipulation regarding personal letters. Apart from anything else, there was a great deal of tension between Joyce and Beckett in the early 1930s, not least because of Lucia Joyce's infatuation with the young writer, which, in the end, he failed to reciprocate. He was, he had to admit, mostly interested in her father. As we know, Lucia did become part of Beckett's life (he visited her in the mental asylum in Northampton in the 1950s), but also of his oeuvre: she is portrayed as the Syra-Cusa in Beckett's first novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (written from 1932; published posthumously in 1992).<sup>7</sup> Probably all of Beckett's letters to Lucia have been destroyed by the Joyce estate and those that will have been exchanged on the subject of Lucia between Beckett and Joyce will have been excluded from this collection on the grounds of Beckett's stipulation. Nonetheless, it feels that a significant part of the private life "only having bearing on my work" is missing here. Other than that, this is one of the greatest collections of letters from a writer I have had the honour to peruse.

#### References

Beckett, Samuel, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (Calder 1963).

---

<sup>7</sup> "Not wishing too upset Joyce anymore than he had already done by rejecting Lucia, Beckett would presumably have tried to garb the character based on her in a modest, fairly opaque cloak of anonymity" (Knowlson 151).

*The European English Messenger*, 21.2 (2012)

Coetzee, J.M., "The Making of Samuel Beckett", *The New York Review of Books*, April 30, 2009.

Heaney, Seamus, in "Books of the Year 2009", *TLS*, November 25, 2009.

Josipovici, Gabriel, "Letters from Beckett", *TLS*, March 11, 2009. Knowlson, James, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (Bloomsbury 1996).

---

**Jopi Nyman, 2009. *Home, Identity, and Mobility in Contemporary Diasporic Fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.**

*Elena Voj*

*Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania*

---

It has become increasingly difficult to talk about post-colonial literature without the danger of swimming in apparently the same waters more than twice; beyond all the limitations that a certain theoretical framework imposes on the object (and the subject) of study, Jopi Nyman's work is the result of well-balanced critical discourse and much labour invested in a project supported by the Academy of Finland.

The focus of Nyman's interest rests on questions of diasporic identity, on mobility as the dynamics involved in the process of identity (re)construction, and other derivatives at hand when analysing contemporary literature with a post-colonial critical eye. A mobile study in itself, the book retraces the contours of both black British contemporary writing and ethnic American contemporary novels while at the same time clearly pinpointing varieties of diasporic instances on a virtual map of today's diasporic fiction. It is mobile not only because it shifts between thirteen different literary works that are relevant for the topic in discussion, but also because it does it with a care for textual, narrative subtleties.

Interestingly enough, Nyman reminds us, the original meaning of *diaspora* is that of "scattering", a process by which identity is not only deconstructed, but also reconstructed, or, to turn to Deleuze and Guattari, it plays a part in a larger process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Caught in the interplay between belonging and not belonging somewhere, identity searches for the frequently celebrated *Third Space of enunciation* that is so widely appealed to by Nyman in his address to Homi K. Bhabha's ground work. Besides the extensive use of compulsory metalinguistic tools whose inventory include notions such as *home, homeland, nation, community, exile or history*, the study becomes even more interesting for its more complex explorations around issues such as *globalized modernity* (which, in Nyman's reading, manages to successfully redefine cultures not only throughout their "international relations", but also through the "productive communicative processes" involved in the dynamics of cultural exchange and negotiation), *intercultural flows* (a rediscussion of Arjun Appadurai's *global flows* of people, money, machinery, images and ideas in their spatial metaphor transposition as imagined landscapes) or the more familiar *homing desire*.

The analysis of various authors dealing with the depiction of diasporic existence rests (to some extent) on a dichotomic logic of alternating exclusion or agreement. Nyman clearly and cleverly marks the difference between *diaspora* and *exile* (the first more characteristic of contemporary post-colonial fiction, whereas the second more appropriate for the European or American modernisms and their taste for a nostalgic and sometimes mythical reconstruction of home and homeland from the necessary yet sufficient geographic and aesthetic distance) or *exile* and *refugee* (the question of creativity holding an important part in the staging of the exile, while the refugee accepts its threefold liminality as physical, symbolic and spatial). If

some traditionally accepted dichotomies are overtly opposed (*colonizer-colonized*, *nature-culture*, as visible in the analysis of Caryl Phillips's *A State of Independence*), others are reread with a post-binaristic overtone; *history* is frequently dispersed or particularized in (*hi*)stories of people and places or people in certain places (see Jamal Mahjoub's *The Carrier* as a recollection of (*hi*)stories of European identities). *Identity* is almost every time related to its – if not better then at least different – half: *otherness*. *Home* is almost never a stable place; in *The Carrier*, Nyman perceives home as the result of conflicting variations on the same theme, which eventually leads to the identification of a *not-home* concept. In *A State of Independence*, home is a strange place in the eyes of a former native, now a stranger himself, returning to an uncomfortable island. Other times, *home* is extended to *community*, mainly since, Nyman asserts, "Diasporic identity is [...] one based more on communally shared histories and myths than on homeland" (p. 131). In this context, the process of simply *being* is gradually referred to as *becoming* (Nyman would often find textual support for the idea that identity is first and foremost performance as in Hari Kunzru's *The Impressionist* or Mike Phillips's *A Shadow of Myself*) in the same way as *formation* and *transformation* become flipsides of the same coin.

Beyond such implied dichotomies or (post-)binaries, Jopi Nyman's book also records instances of hybridization, from the authors in question (clearly classified into black British authors and ethnic American novelists and ethnically interesting for their hybrid origins: Kamila Shamsie is a Pakistani/British/American or Diana Abu-Jaber is an Arab American writer – just to pick two random examples) to the wide range of topics (emphasizing either the hybridization of Europe or that of America with Mike Phillips and Cynthia Kadohata respectively; the hybrid nature of their protagonists like in the almost allegorical example of *A Shadow of Myself*). When hybridization is even further expanded, textual, cultural and political strategies suffer an acute process of reversal. The focus is shifted from the centre to the peripheries, local cultures become radically hybridized to the point of trivialization or tourist kitsch like in *A State of Independence*, Europe is perceived as an exotic destination by a non-European traveller, literary genres are highly distorted and challenged – a traditional *Bildungsroman* may be re-read in black British *Bildungsromans* like in *The Impressionist*, and parody is often employed as a sharp tool for remodeling the picaresque, as in Ana Castillo's *Sapogonia*.

For a study promising its readers an insight into a generous subject, the book performs several loops in the space of diasporic fiction with due care for both textual grounding and cultural echoing, with both a gentle touch of inclusive methodologies and an occasional bitter critique of postethnic positions with their homogenizing tendencies. All in all, the readers are comfortable in these theoretic whirls while Jopi Nyman is critically at home in many places and contexts.

---

Michael Niblett and Kerstin Oloff (eds) 2009. *Perspectives on the 'Other America'. Comparative Approaches to Caribbean and Latin American Culture*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

José-Carlos Redondo-Olmedilla  
University of Almería, Spain

---

We know that the name America itself has been controversial, and while *Perspectives on the 'Other America'* reflects this, the treatment offered by the authors is intelligent and

indisputable. The collection, edited by Michael Niblett and Kerstin Oloff, presents the major concern of rescuing and establishing the Caribbean as a paradigm or an “archetypal space”. The Caribbean appears in the collection as a natural space for the discourses of creolisation and transversality, due to the specific social and historical conditions of the Antilles. Although the title seems to suggest both Caribbean and Latin American cultures, the reader gets the impression that the Caribbean receives better coverage. In spite of this, the reader gets different stances and approaches from the various essays and they enable him or her to experience real critical production.

The book owes three of its essays to the conference “Writing the Other America: Comparative Approaches to Caribbean and Latin American Literature”, held in Warwick (2006) and funded by the HRC of the University of Warwick. The essays not only address the ideas of alterity and otherness, but also pay due attention to Glissant’s views on the ‘Other America’, along with the ideas of confluence and creolisation. They are ideas that could be criticized because they are so fashionable – let us remember Stanley Fish’s famous term “boutique multiculturalism” – but in this context they become serious and credible. Apart from some rashes of Guevarian nostalgia – an unavoidable and almost incurable attitude for the last generation – the book is set firmly in the present.

There seems to be different degrees of density in the essays of the collection, ranging from theory to applied-theory. It is a collection that brings together a wide range of different materials classified into four parts/sections: 1. The ‘Other America’ and Representation, 2. Otherness, Gender and Sexuality in the Expanded Caribbean, 3. Location, Region and Culture and 4. Caribbean Writing in a Global Context. The introduction, the first part and the fourth part could well constitute the core of the work, while the second and third parts could equally constitute a lighter but necessary and more accessible application of the aforementioned theory.

The introduction, by Michael Niblett and Kerstin Oloff, illustrates the arrangement of the collection, varied as it is, but the justification is more than clear, as its major concern is an utterly diversified and enriched geographical cultural pangea. The first part, made up of the chapters “Expanding the Caribbean”, by David Hulme; “The Arc of the ‘Other America’: Landscape, Nature, and Region in Eric Walrond’s *Tropic Death*”, by Michael Niblett; and “American Landscapes and Erasures: Frederic Church’s *The Vale of St. Thomas* and the Recovery of History in Landscape Painting”, by Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, is not just a stimulus to understand ‘otherness’ through the reflection of Caribbean culture but also an opportunity to pose questions “over the applicability of an exclusively national approach” (17). Interesting differences are equally evoked – they could be based upon the metaphorical, the linguistic or the racial, but in the end the authors lead the reader to think that they are like meridians and parallels: imaginary lines. In this expansive process Michael Niblett reminds us through Walrond’s stories that nature can also be a structuring principle in its untamed way. Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert also analyses nature on canvas, discussing the changing ecological dynamics of a post-emancipation society.

The second part invigorates the discussion on ‘otherness’ through three different stages, the first “Other Americas, Other Genderings...”, by Heidi Bojsen in which the ‘Other America’ is a differential device or ‘rhizome’ which does not necessarily presuppose a colliding opposition. Another stance in the second stage is provided by Omise’eke Natasha Tinsley through the analysis of the cultural practices of Surinamese women who love women in “No Storm to Blow Me Over? Mapping Same-Sex Sexuality in the Other Americas.” It is

cartography, but this time applied to the erotic geography that this Caribbean hyperspace provides. This section finishes with the novelist Mayra Santos Febres interviewed on central issues such as location, inequalities, the Spanish Caribbean, the transforming modes of identity for the black Caribbean woman. She provides wonderful answers like “Imagination is to see reality’s flip-side” or “Reality is alive, constituted by those aspects in tension and motion. Imagination puts back the motion in the translation of reality into art” (152). The next section, with works by Néstor E. Rodríguez, Patricia Krus and Paulette Ramsay accompanies the reader through an examination of regionalism from specific locations such as Puerto Rico, Suriname or the Caribbean area of Mexico. The final part of the work underlines the role of Caribbean writers as representatives of true modernity or modernity already concocted. On equal terms Caribbean thought is presented as a decolonizing tool and as a contributor to the understanding of the modernity of our world. Concepts such as hybridity, the fallacy of nationalism, the double position, insider/outsider, mother, ex-colonial culture and the new transitional identity states are revitalised through the surveys of Teo D’Haen, Kerstin Oloff or the interview with Lawrence Scott.

One of the good aspects of this book is that the Caribbean is not only envisioned as an archipelago of islands located in the Caribbean, but the collection also refers to the surrounding continental territories without paying excessive tribute to hispanocentrism. The essays address the creative powers of the ‘Other America’ according to the term “La otra América” – a phrase used by the Venezuelan writer Arturo Uslar Pietri in 1947 – to ponder not only the obvious melting-pot sense, something that sounds commonplace, but also to value the different forces of resistance without ignoring that, at the same time, nationalism is a blinding force of resistance. Forces of resistance can be thus equally understood as identity tracers and reality blinders. This is subtle work and certain contributions broaden the cartography of ‘The Other America’ through an analysis of the interactions and interconnections that the authors offer. Some criticism could be made of the multiplicity and disparity of topics, but these only reflect the multiplicity and disparity of the Caribbean itself.

This is certainly a book to learn from. It is not only a book about literature, cultural manifestations or society, it is also a book about the present and the future. Peter Hulme makes reference in his seminal essay to the “expanded Caribbean”, but the term cannot be reserved for this geographical area, since it is a global phenomenon whose pattern lies, revolves and streams from this *locus*. While Charles Wagley approached the three cultural spheres of America as “Euro-America”, “Indo-America” and “Plantation-America”, the term “expanded Caribbean” improves on these categories because it retains the origin while admitting newcomers.

Another valuable asset in the book is its modern comparative literature approach, which challenges the old model of national literature. It offers an incomplete, but alternative crossing of cultural frontiers where the only compass is in the reader’s imagination. It is a book that, without being complete, makes the reader feel renewed. It also presents a rare balance between the ideological slant of literary studies in our time and the old-style recognition of aesthetic values.

**Matt Kimmich, 2008. *Offspring Fictions: Salman Rushdie's Family Novels*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.**

*Miles Leeson*  
*University of Chichester, UK*

---

The ever-growing corpus of criticism concerning Salman Rushdie is reaching a tipping-point. Naturally the first academics to review his work sensibly decided to focus on his Anglo-Indian background and postcolonial theory and how this may provide an overview of his work post-*Grimus* (a rather difficult novel to place within his oeuvre). Not unsurprisingly Rushdie has, at least in his last two novels, begun to disassociate himself with this literary construction. We are now at a point of re-imagining, re-thinking and revisiting Rushdie's early work in order to reinvigorate academic discussion; there needs to be an original application of theory applied to Rushdie's work. Matt Kimmich's book goes some way to achieving this. Whereas previous critics were at odds as to how one could sensibly unite Rushdie's earliest postcolonial work *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988) and *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), Kimmich proposes that it is only by examining Rushdie's discussion of familial bonds that one gets a sense of Rushdie's development. This can then be extrapolated outward to form an understanding of the postcolonial from a different angle than the one usually postulated. For Kimmich it is crucial that the reader re-examine the relationship between parent and child as it provides not only the narrative's central focus but also the primary structuring of the novel.

When I returned to re-read these works it struck me that Kimmich, in his first book and therefore (from reading his acknowledgements) his developed doctoral thesis, has alighted upon a convincing and persuasive argument. When one is reading a novel for a specific trope or stylistic device it becomes clearer to the reader that the narrative layers of the novel are not only blurred but pointing us toward a greater truth. In the case of the novels under Kimmich's scrutiny the protagonist/son, variously Omar Khayyam, Saladin Chamcha, Saleem Sinai and Moraes Zogoiby, has strong familial connections to either his mother or father or both. Furthermore Rushdie allows the natural tension existing between parent and child in the narrative to develop and provide both real and imagined resistance to a set of cultural norms. Kimmich frames these relationships using the work of Edward Said, Gérard Genette and, most notably, Freud and this allows for a theoretical framework to explain the familial tensions within the novels: a clever and original route around the tradition 'straight' postcolonial reading. By doing this Kimmich subverts first-wave Rushdie criticism by re-imagining the autobiographical nature of the novels through psychological and postcolonial concepts – this pays dividends as the familial patterning through each of the novels impacts on the entire text. If one extrapolates from Rushdie's development of the family in these novels it becomes clear that the relationships, especially those between father and son, are emblematic of not only the state and the individual but also of the colonised/coloniser, the individual and a metaphysical reality – be it God or 'other'. In short Kimmich's work provides a firm foundation to re-examine old territory.

There is much to praise then in Kimmich's work and this work of secondary criticism is worthy of its place amongst other, more established authors writing about Rushdie's work. However, there is obvious scope for critique. Kimmich ignores Rushdie's much-overlooked

first novel *Grimus* as he sees it as 'science fiction satire' (which it is) and it does not fit with his thesis. He also overlooks Rushdie's later works (*The Ground Beneath her Feet*, *Fury* and *Shalimar the Clown*) as they do not, he believes, fit into his theoretical conception of Rushdie's work. It would have been useful, if not pertinent, to include a final chapter explaining the detail of his reading of the novels he has excluded from his work. The most obvious omission from his work is *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*; although it is a novella for children, it contains patriarchal relationships. *Haroun* could have provided Kimmich more material to work with and would have strengthened his argument considerably. The same argument could be made for *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Why does Kimmich neglect these works?

In spite of these deficiencies, the work is generally successful. Kimmich's style of writing is engaging and the division of the chapters allows the argument to move well. He provides an accurate account of the novels he chooses and his critical gaze does not, as so often can happen, descend to taking Rushdie to task for ideological failings nor does it retread the usual treatment of *The Satanic Verses*. The fresh voice that Kimmich brings allows the reader to re-evaluate the unique place that Rushdie holds in the contemporary canon of English Literature and for this he should rightly be praised.

---

**Suman Gupta and Milena Katsarska (eds) 2009. *English Studies On This Side: Post-2007 Reckonings*. Plovdiv: Plovdiv University Press.**

**Balz Engler**  
*University of Basel, Switzerland*<sup>8</sup>

---

Books discussing the problems of teaching English at non-anglophone universities are rare. This is not surprising, as so many of us on the Continent prefer to see ourselves as doing the same as our British and American colleagues, albeit under more difficult circumstances; this may also be the reason why there is little exchange among us about the specific problems (and opportunities) we have in our classrooms. ESSE, of course, offers an excellent platform to address these issues.

*English Studies on This Side: Post-2007 Reckonings* offers interesting and stimulating material. The mystifying title confidently marks the location outside the English-speaking world (specifically Bulgaria and Romania); 2007 marks the formal accession of these two countries to the European Union (which plays a marginal role in the book, however). Most of the well-informed if somewhat uneven contributions are also of interest to those of us who live outside the countries involved, because they invite comparisons and show, at the same time, that the issues are remarkably similar all over non-anglophone Europe. The comparisons put our own situation into perspective, and encourage us to study the same issues in our own context: the definition of a teaching canon, the planning of curricula both in linguistics and literature, the relationships between high schools and universities, the writing of literary history, the conditions of staff and student exchanges, and, remarkably, the practice of note-making.

The similarities are equally instructive. The clash between English Studies (of the Anglo-American flavour) and the Continental tradition of Philology is interestingly discussed

---

<sup>8</sup> Balz Engler is co-editor, with Renate Haas, of *European English Studies*, I and II (Leicester: The English Association for ESSE, 2000 and 2008).

in the introduction. The disruptive effect of a British Council scheme of promoting Cultural Studies in the English department of a Bulgarian university (Veliko Turnovo) is dealt with in two contributions. The concentration on contemporary popular culture led to the neglect of the literary and historical dimensions so much cherished in Continental English departments. This example is also used to highlight an issue that is not restricted to Cultural Studies: the neglect of research in comparative studies (for example, English and Bulgarian culture), an area where non-anglophone universities have the exclusive opportunity of developing relevant knowledge. One contribution even shows how the application of a notion common in English literary studies (the Gothic) to a literature where it has not existed before leads to new insights, and, it should be added, can contribute to shared European discourse on literature.

The book is based on a collaborative project between the Open University in Britain and six universities in Bulgaria and Romania, funded by the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust. Fifteen contributions are by Bulgarian, three by Romanian, and six by British scholars. The quickest way of getting hold of the collection is via Google Books (where a detailed table of contents and the complete texts are available). Hard copies are best ordered via Milena Katsarska at the University of Plovdiv at [milena.katsarska@gmail.com](mailto:milena.katsarska@gmail.com)

---

**Christina Stachurski, 2009. *Reading Pakeha? Fiction and Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.**

*John Miller*  
*University of Northern British Columbia, Canada*

---

The Maori word *Pakeha* has been used since the early nineteenth century to designate New Zealanders of European ancestry. As such the term ostensibly includes a range of discrete settler communities, although conceptions of white New Zealand identity have tended to privilege a British and/or Protestant heritage over a variety of alternative European cultural traditions, marginalising other historical strands. A straightforward distinction of Pakeha from Maori also occludes a range of more complex heredities. As Christina Stachurski points out, it “was not until the 1990s that census forms [...] offered people the opportunity to identify as Maori *and* European/ Pakeha, rather than one *or* the other” (xiii). In approaching questions of identity in twentieth-century New Zealand fiction, then, Stachurski’s study adds nuance to terms that historically have been over-simplified. Particularly, she aims to investigate the “shaping and definition of the categories ‘Pakeha’ and ‘Maori’ ... in relation to each other and over time” (xx). Following a lengthy theoretical introduction the scope of her monograph is confined to close analysis of three texts that encompass specific periods in the development of New Zealand identity politics. Through New Zealand’s ‘first great novel’ (1), John Mulgan’s 1939 *Man Alone*, to Keri Hulme’s 1983 *the bone people* and Alan Duff’s 1990 *Once Were Warriors*, *Reading Pakeha* charts the tensions and ambivalences generated by decolonisation, bi-culturalism and the Maori cultural renaissance. Although some of the monograph’s digressions into literary theory (Barthes, Belsey, Iser), seem unnecessary and remind the reader that this is a doctoral thesis reshaped, Stachurski’s writing is readable and informative throughout and marked by a minute engagement with its ethical and ideological contexts.

Mulgan’s *Man Alone* is a product of the great Depression of the 1930s, which took a heavy toll on New Zealand’s predominantly agricultural economy. It is perhaps seldom read

outside its country of origin where it has been a staple of school and university literature programmes since the 1960s, valued for a gritty realism that ostensibly contests previous colonialist representations of New Zealand. Stachurski, however, shapes a convincing argument that Mulgan's novel is in fact a "late-colonial text focusing on the conquest of land" (2). Unfolding a broadly psychoanalytic methodology, *Reading Pakeha* reminds readers of the well-remarked colonial trope of the land as a feminised absence to be filled by the explorer's masculinised presence. The novel's central figure Johnson, a down-on-his-luck English émigré, is subjected by Stachurski to a lengthy Freudian analysis that unpicks his approach to the landscape he traverses, specifically the Kaimanawas (mountains in New Zealand's North Island) and the Rangipo desert. While Freudian readings of colonial encounters might usually strike alarm bells, *Reading Pakeha* avoids being blunt and reductive and is thoughtful and interesting in its portrayal of the masculinist discourse that emerges. As the novel "defines the country as available and empty of native inhabitants", it presents an "English, male, heterosexual" (34) protagonist who operates as an embodiment of hegemonic identity, but is yet "divided against himself" (35) in the combination of homosociality ('mateship'), homophobia and sexual repression that Mulgan exalts.

Gender and sexuality are also prominent themes in Stachurski's analysis of the Booker prize-winning *the bone people*. Hulme's novel emerges out of 1970s' second-wave feminism, the flowering of New Zealand nationalism that countered French nuclear testing in the Pacific and the Maori renaissance. As such it comprises a more radical approach to identity politics than Mulgan's, although with some significant caveats. While Stachurski distinguishes *the bone people's* postcolonial agenda from *Man Alone's* "eurocentric late-colonialism" (96), Hulme's portrayal of gender and sexuality, she argues, is 'strikingly similar' to Mulgan's, particularly in its conflation of sex and gender. This pattern is most evident in the characterization of Kerewin whose sexual neutrality frees her from traditional feminine roles only to contain her within tropes of masculine behaviour. Consequently, "the representation of feminism *only* in terms of imitating men and a particular masculinity effectively limited women's liberation while reifying men as the 'norm'" (95). *The bone people*, however, is more progressive (albeit problematically) in its depiction of Maoriness. The New Age, anti-nuclear sensibility the novel voices identifies Maoris too easily and too neatly with a conservationist spirituality, producing in many ways a reprise of colonialist noble savagery. Notwithstanding this, Stachurski contends, the novel foregrounds and validates Maori cultures and offers Pakeha "a newly local sense of national identity" (94) in opposition to a previously alienated habitation of the natural environment.

The book's final section takes on perhaps the most high profile novel to have emerged from New Zealand, *Once Were Warriors*. Like Hulme, Alan Duff is a writer of combined Maori and Pakeha descent and his bleak portrayal of domestic violence and gang culture in Auckland's fictional Pine Block suburb has gained added prominence from Lee Tamahori's film adaptation. As the title emphasises, *Once Were Warriors'* depiction of urban Maori is structured around a historical legacy that has, the novel's logic suggests, mutated into a debased form in contemporary New Zealand society. Warriorhood has been replaced by a grim social reality that distantly echoes previous cultural formations. Its "overriding implication", then in Stachurski's words, is that "Maori identity is biologically determined and a mutable cultural process" (113); Duff's novel displays its Maori characters as "innately aggressive" (131). Stachurski's account of both the book and the film version provides a clear guide to the controversies and complexities of these issues; how "*Once Were Warriors* reflected

and reinforced the general perception of Maori and Pakeha as distinct and separate" (169), and, in similar vein to both Mulgan and Hulme, how it casts Maori as a "singular entity" (170) that serves to facilitate stereotyping. While New Zealand literature has currently at best a marginal presence in European literature syllabuses, *Reading Pakeha* has abroad appeal beyond its specific geo-historical context. Its readings of postcolonialism and environmental and gender politics, in particular, offer valuable insights into larger movements in the academy while opening possibilities for fruitful comparison with decolonisation elsewhere.

---

**Christine Reynier and Jean-Michel Ganteau (eds) 2010. *Autonomy and Commitment in Twentieth-Century British Literature*. Montpellier: Presses Univ. de la Méditerranée.**

*Erik Martiny*

*Lycée International de St Germain en Laye, France*

---

This highly informative and exciting collection of twenty-five essays offers a wealth of approaches to an area of research that has continued to prosper over the last few decades. The volume extends its remit to incorporate other forms of commitment such as the practice of art-for-art's-sake, refusing the reductive opposition between the two notions it seeks to elucidate, so that the reader is given a captivating bird's-eye view of British literature's interaction with the public sphere from T. S. Eliot to Emma Tennant.

The first essay, by Jean-Jacques Lecerle, provides an overview of Theodor Adorno's (historically motivated) melodramatic statements about art. In the context of Adorno's view of foreign words as "the Jews of language", Lecerle illustrates how T. S. Eliot's Babelism partially rehabilitates his anti-Semitism. The end of the essay examines lexical borrowings in a Bakhtinian and Formalist light, concluding with a glance at parodies in *The Waste Land*.

In a chapter on 'female aestheticism', Catherine Delyfer explores the ins and outs of Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown*. Lee's critical response to Pre-Raphaelite aestheticism is interestingly conveyed through her critique of beauty as devoid of justice, charity and "moral excellence" (34). Margaret Gillespie, for her part, gives a stimulating account of Mina Loy's silencing due to the erotic nature of her work. Gillespie's essay also provides a biographical perspective on Loy's connection with most of the modernist art movements of her time. She analyses Loy's syncretism as the wariness of identifying too closely with a single aesthetic.

A widely studied author in French academic circles, Virginia Woolf gets the lion's share of critical attention in this volume. One of these essays, by Woolf specialist Christine Reynier, provides a compelling study of Woolf's experimental short stories, showing how Woolf's allusions to war, religion and politics impinge on her supposedly autonomous modernism. Reynier argues that the metafictional elements of Woolf's trans-generic essay-stories do not debar her shorter writings from politics. The tension between stereotypical depictions of Semitic characters and what David Bradshaw calls the "philo-Semitic" elements in Woolf's work is also cogently analyzed. Reynier argues that Woolf's story "The Duchess and the Jeweller" runs the risk of being misunderstood because of "irony and indirection" (124), always a risk with modernist or postmodernist authorial distancing techniques.

Alain Blayac takes "*cum grano salis*" Graham Greene's assertions that *The Power and the Glory* was his only novel written to a thesis: Blayac also examines how artistic autonomy and committed Augustinian Catholicism interact in this novel. In her essay on Malcolm Lowry,

Pascale Tollance argues that *Under the Volcano* "cannot be seen simply as a novel asserting the value of commitment against the irresponsibility of autonomy" (172), analysing the complex slippages that display Lowry's wariness of discourse. In a psychoanalytic perspective, employing D. W. Winnicott's concept of the "intermediate area" between infant play and adult culture, Ben Winsworth explores how John Fowles's *The Magus* presents art as existentially transformative.

Jean-Michel Ganteau offers a more historically-grounded account of Brigid Brophy's novel *In Transit*, examining the ways in which the novel's baroque aesthetic "performs its autonomy from the conventions of the well-made novel" and its committed rejection of the culture industry. Ganteau also shows how gender bending and generic hybridity make this novel a typical and yet still charmingly eccentric "representative of the experimental, metafictional craze that took hold of the sixties and seventies" (196). Sandrine Sorlin's essay on linguistic dystopias offers an interesting extension of Brophy's unsettling novelistic funhouse: Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* is presented in its context as a response to the fact that some English politicians were taking a favourable view of "Skinnerian-type conditioning as it was taking place in some American prisons" (204).

After having considered such authors as Emma Tennant, Martin Amis, Will Self, Philip Pullman, Hilary Mantel and James Kelman, the volume closes with Laurent Mellet's well-informed account of Zadie Smith's commitment to E. M. Forster in her provocatively similar rewritings of his novels, and Julie Morère's consideration of David Mitchell's alleged escapism, focusing on his third novel *Cloud Atlas*.

Although the volume offers an energizing variety of viewpoints on the topic of art and politics, it has an occasional tendency to present political commitment and critical social commentary as an escapable moral obligation for writers. An apolitical stance is sometimes implicitly deemed to be either inconceivable or axiologically unacceptable. Another reservation one might be entitled to express is prompted by the lack of information regarding the political persuasions of authors - how they can be situated on the left- to right-wing scale - but it is probably unfair to expect this degree of rigid factuality from a series of loosely-connected conference papers that do not purport to offer biographical outlines.

---

**Stella Borg Barthet (ed.) 2009. *A Sea for Encounters: Essays Towards a Postcolonial Commonwealth*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.**

*Stavros Stavrou Karayanni*  
*European University Cyprus*

---

*A Sea for Encounters* is a rich volume of essays compiled from a selection of papers presented at the 2005 European Association for Commonwealth Languages and Literatures conference in Malta. Divided into six thematic sections, the book appeals to a wide range of research interests whose main point of convergence is the field of postcolonial studies. The first section "Towards a Postcolonial Commonwealth," also the book's subtitle, indicates a certain cautious and reflective approach manifest in the term 'towards'. Indeed, this volume seeks to embark on a course or, to put it differently, a trajectory where the various stations will furnish the experience and not the expectation of arrival at some destination (all this is strongly evocative of Constantine Cavafy's poem "Ithaca," of course). This opening section features essays by Peter O. Stummer, Monica Bungaro, and Daniel Massa, chair of the 2005 Commonwealth

Writers' Prize. The remaining sections provide papers on the following themes: 'Towards a Postcolonial Commonwealth', 'Borders and Crossings', 'Perception, Space and Time', 'Religion and the Sacred', 'History and Narrative' and 'Language and Translation'.

This thematic arrangement makes the volume accessible and user friendly but does not work very well in terms of making it cohesive. Although the book openly avows its emergence from conference papers, I feel that the diversity of topics, the treatment of a range of important and exciting authors and works, and the variety of theoretical approaches should occasion an open voyage away from the moorings of the EACLALS conference. There were several moments when I felt the book remained unnecessarily anchored to the conference themes and preoccupations when already the concept behind the project itself afforded an expansion. Daniel Massa's "The Relevance of Commonwealth Literature," is a speech that opens the book. Had it been revised as an article it would make a wonderful and acute critique of the institution of the Commonwealth Literature Prize. Indeed, he raises a question that is so poignant that it begs further elaboration and a larger context. Furthermore, a detailed and more effective introduction, for example, would have instated the important geographical and historical location of Malta and the Mediterranean Sea as framing the productive political debates of the book. Regionalism has been gathering accrued significance in postcolonial studies as a mode of re-casting and thereby challenging standardised geographical groupings of the world according to economic wealth and socio-cultural orientation. Encounters of the Mediterranean, therefore, could be framed with determination and purpose offering a fresh understanding of issues that have dominated postcolonial studies and remain current and even urgent; issues that are closely connected to a critical reassessment of the contested parameters of identity, borders, and language – to mention but a few – and contested binaries such as metropolis and periphery, coloniser and colonised.

This volume would not be very useful or appealing to a general reader on postcolonial topics despite the cover blurb that calls the essays "general." Furthermore, the texts discussed are so disparate and the discussions themselves employ such a range of approaches and methodologies that the interested reader or researcher would limit his/her scope to specific chapters that treat specific questions. Graduate students researching specific authors and postcolonial scholars working on cultural, linguistic, or literary questions would find enough useful material here. And there is a large and exciting range of authors discussed; among others, Thea Astley, André Aciman, Chinua Achebe, Michael Ondaatje, Edward Atiyah, Salman Rushdie, Austin Clarke, Caryl Phillips, Zadie Smith, Margaret Atwood, Nadine Gordimer, Tayeb Salih, and Amitav Ghosh.

It would be impossible to refer to all 28 chapters of the book, so I will mention only a few that have made a strong impression on me. In Monica Bungaro's "The Teaching of African Literature in the UK: Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications" the discussion is lively and the politics pertinent and urgent. The whole paper, however, could use some heavy editing. Sabrina Brancato grapples with the complex cultural dynamics that shape modern subjectivities and illustrates her thesis with readings of novels by Kureishi and Adebayo. Suzanne Reichl takes a rather unusual approach to literary study, arguing for the ways that texts themselves cross mental spaces between cultures and focusing closely on black and Asian British writing and how it "resorts to strategies of mediation and translation" (118). Jacqueline Jondot performs a memorable reading of Edward Atiyah's *The Eagle Flies from the East* and provides us with new insights into the east/west dialectic.

---

**Stella Borg Barthet (ed.) 2009. *Shared Waters: Soundings in Postcolonial Literatures*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.**

**Mark Sullivan**  
Nottingham Trent University, Great Britain

---

*Shared Waters: Soundings in Postcolonial Literatures* is comprised of twenty-nine essays delivered at the European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies held in Malta in March 2005. This book is the companion volume to *A Sea for Encounters*. Any collection of diverse papers necessarily encounters problems of consistency and thematic coherence not least because of the vast array of literatures, geographies and historical moments contained therein. This volume, collected under a larger heading of "Sharing Places", is further subdivided into five more focused headings and in this manner the book avoids any such thematic inconsistency. Although they are brief, many of the essays achieve a significant level of detail. Due to the number of essays collected in the volume, I will comment on just a few topics. This is not intended to suggest a lack of quality in the wider material but rather to reflect on those essays that appealed most to this reviewer.

The first section 'Projecting Postcolonialism' poses some interesting questions about the current status of Postcolonial studies, the formation of its canon and its future. Jesus Varela Zapata's "What Lies Ahead" commences with a discussion of the evolution of the English and American canons before proceeding to discuss the processes of selection and subsequent exclusion that such canonisation entails. It is in this context that Zapata considers the formation of a Postcolonial, or rather Commonwealth Canon. Zapata avoids perpetuating a dogmatic argument for or against such a canon but also notes the "deep roots in Marxism" (23) which inform Postcolonial and Cultural Studies generally and the importance of canonization to a practice which effectively writes against the "literary tradition of the colonisers" (24).

Gerhard Stilz's essay "Territorial Terrors: Colonial Spaces and Postcolonial Revisions-some Basic Concepts" commences the second section of the volume entitled "War and Remembrance." It is perhaps because Stilz chooses to align works of literature with particular territories, such as "Home" or "Native Country" (59) that his essay is particularly accessible. Although brief and self-consciously basic, Stilz's essay is an incredibly useful exploration of those concepts of space and the manner of inhabiting and representing which underpin many of essays that follow. In returning to a conceptual understanding that humans are "place-related beings" (51) Stilz sets a corporeal context for the 'Territorial Terrors' he engages with later in works by writers such as Chinua Achebe and J.M Coetzee. Although Stilz does not undertake a detailed and close textual reading of a particular author this essay provides sufficient grounding to form the basis of such a project.

Also in this section Chantal Kwast-Greef's "Shared Places and Maimed Bodies: Flesh of the Past, Soul of the Future (or vice-versa) in *Once Were Warriors*" considers the representation of Maori culture. Kwast-Greef's interrogation of the representation of a "decaying tradition" (75) focuses on the film *Once Were Warriors* and takes in the Maori practice of facial tattooing amongst other traditional practices. Juxtaposed against the larger general territories of Stilz's essay, Kwast-Greef's consideration of the body as not only space but as contested and shared space is enlightening. The "moko" (77) or facial tattoo, which was previously outlawed in 1907

by the Tohunga Suppression Act, is in Kwast-Greef's reading a method to "translate a capital and strength of the past into the present, into the 'common' place and 'shared zone' of the present where body and honour can be regained" (79).

The third section "Writing Women" illustrates one of the main assets of the volume with the inclusion of contributions from contemporaneous writers, such as Leila Abouzeid's "Becoming a writer in Morocco." Abouzeid's self-conscious and self-reflective essay is informative and insightful; the process of writing and encountering a marginalising culture as a woman writer is discussed in a frank and open manner. So often in academic writing an author's own experiences are filtered through a interpretative framework and it is because of this that Abouzeid's insights on being a woman writer in Morocco are so valuable.

The fourth section "Islands and the Sea" collects together those essays which take the sea and water as a shared and contested space. Adrian Grima's contribution "'They are us': Interview with Caryl Philips" is another engagement with a living author. Kevin Stephen Magri's "Finding Nemo: Puzzling Maltese Identity in Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'" (207) considers Poe's discourse in the context of the sailor as a liminal or even nomadic figure. Magri argues that the Nemo character in Poe's story is "an archetype for the man who explores the seas and his own identity" (215). Although focused on the one text Magri's essay illustrates the ability of the sea to effect and create identity or even non-identity throughout culture. There are liminal characters that occupy multiple spaces simultaneously.

The fifth section "Shared Spaces" contains three essays focused on Canada. Janne Korkka's essay, "Exploring Boundaries: The North in Western Canadian Writing" is excellently written. Although Korkka's essay is self-contained and independent of Stilz's earlier contribution, "Exploring Boundaries" reinforces the importance of space in cultural representation. Space or rather "place" for Korkka may be "realised in more than one way" (337) in literature. In highlighting the effect of place on the process of writing, Korkka contextualises discourse in the geographical milieu of its conception. Furthermore Korkka's assertion that a particular place can be said to be "so uniquely itself that it is able to resist homogenising discourse" (348) is a fascinating insight.

Though many of the essays are author-specific, the contributors are adept at contextualising their subjects within the wider remit of the conference proceedings and as a consequence a scholar of Postcolonial Studies will find much to aid their studies in this volume.

---

**Massimo Bacigalupo and Luisa Villa (eds) 2011. *The Politics and Poetics of Displacement. Modernism off the Beaten Track*. Pasion di Prato: Campanotto Editore.**

*Paola Di Gennaro*  
*Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Italy*

---

At a time when the notions of Modernism and Postmodernism seem to be more susceptible than ever to redefinition and repositioning, the book edited by Massimo Bacigalupo and Luisa Villa interprets them in the light of two topical discourses: wandering and displacement. This natural pair is examined through very different approaches in ten essays on Modernist writers, explored in their relationship between metropolis and desert, inside and outside: that is, the relationship with the Other and the displacement that it implies. The journey is in fact seen through a multitude of dramatizations and metaphorizations of artistic displacement; the

approach to the aesthetic tension between metaphysical and material movements touches on politics, biography, religion, and oscillates between incorporation and expulsion.

The opening essay is Luisa Villa's description of a war correspondent, G. W. Steevens, "the arch-offender among the British popular press" (16). Paradoxically, through the analysis of what we can consider a not strictly literary genre, Steevens emerges as a pure Modernist writer who transforms "events into alluring objects" (15). Through his cinematographic style – tactile, coloured, noisy – he created a new way of writing for the popular press, describing the war's moments of horror as a performance. He is a Modernist inventor, one of those who learned how to reproduce the new sounds of modern destruction, leaving no room for sentimentalism but rather for sensorialism. In contrast to Steeven's "jingoism", Angelica Palumbo's essay examines E. M. Forster's Green-Alexandrian epiphanies and his Modernistic Orientalism. Here geography plays a full role as both physical and mental dislocation, describing the path that led the author to his *Passage to India*. A path made up of recollection and insertion of myth and history in his paratexts on Egypt, a journey upstream towards the creation of his "literary anthropology based on ancient myths" (32). Epiphanies of a collective past, fragments, ambiguity, evanescence, auras, wandering become structure, and characters move through history and books, where emotion and fascination rather than theories seem to prevail.

Nicoletta Brazzelli offers a portrayal of another authentic modern topos: ice. And she does so in presenting a travel book by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, emblematically called *The Worst Journey in the World* (1922), based on his failed exploration in the race to the South Pole. The elements at stake are: patriotism, imperialism, manhood, and a much older English penchant for the Romantic idea of exploration and adventurous quest, which reaches its peak in the second decade of the twentieth century thanks to Scott's and Shackleton's Antarctic "triumphant defeats". Ice itself is depicted as a "metaphorical modernist space": a remote inalterable land of hostility and alienation, dystopian or utopian. What is interesting is Cherry-Garrard's sense of guilt and a dramatic emotion of the text that Brazzelli rightly also associates with the "fragmented and disturbed post-war sensibility", attitude of the man who, in a way or another, has faced the end of the world. Anna Hoag introduces another important thematic cluster of Modernist literature: women, gardens, and travel. The relationship between home and abroad, both places of creation, are analyzed in Vita Sackville-West's works, in particular in her travelogue *Passenger to Teheran* (1926). What emerges is the non-conflictual dichotomy of domesticity and otherness, both concealing artistic pleasures and both allowing women to subversively gain a "room of their own". The Modernist woman becomes the creator of an in-between space, more modern than others because cut off from tradition: an alternative for *flâneuses* to male-dressed camouflages.

Robert Byron cannot be missing in a book on displacement with his *The Road to Oxiana* (1937). Laura Colombino examines the mythmaking power of the travelogue: fragmentary, highly aesthetic, erudite; she argues that architecture and travel might be "secretly coincident" for Byron (85). The humanist quest is taken abroad, where forms – literary and architectural – can play the Modernist game with the negotiation between self and other, in pictorial moments of being. Another great Modernist, another identity in transit, D. H. Lawrence, is the object of Stefania Michelucci's study, where he is depicted more than others as "victim" of a Modernist *malaise*. In *Morning in Mexico* (1927) the fragmentation is stylistic, but also epistemological, as the representation of the other seems impossible in a coherent and impartial way. The stories analyzed are accounts of dreams broken in their contact with

Otherness, of heroines who cannot fulfil completely the transformation into something else, and lose their identity without finding a new one. In Lawrence's works there seems to be, therefore – and this is what Michelucci wishes to point out – the impossibility of erasing one's own cultural identity and of regeneration by the simple encounter with the other.

A different kind of dissolution appears in the ingenious essay by Silvia Panizza on Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet* (1957-1960) and on Durrell's contribution to *Personal Landscape*, a little-known literary magazine founded in Cairo in 1942 by a group of English exiled poets. In rediscovering this singular centre of cultural production, it is possible to follow the poets' recognition of their place in history and geography. This sober magazine was so cohesive "as if time and place, rather than persons, had written it" (100); it hosted minds coming together in displacement, wanting "not beauty but honesty" (100). The eternal question of literary elaboration of one's biography is at stake in Rose Macaulay's *The Towers of Trebizond* (1956), a novel based on her journey in Turkey. Anna Viola Sborgi gives us a double interpretation of the other: the cultural other and the *other from the writer* in the process of writing fiction. In opposition to Lawrence's books, the possibility of spiritual change does exist. What is particularly Modernist here is the question of identity, but also the gender issue, which is itself experimental in this work, "a process of cross-fertilization" (124).

Massimo Bacigalupo's contribution is a rich description of the fiction of Essad Bey, a Jewish-born writer who converted to Islam when he was a teenager, and died in Positano as a de facto refugee from Nazi persecution. His work is associated with "modernist myth-making" (128), as here too exoticism plays the role of reliever from a frustrating reality. In a life full of heroic aims, his unpublished personal letters, brilliantly quoted by Bacigalupo, depict the consciousness of the hopelessness of his attempts at being of some use to the Duce. Essad, an "ironic hero of Fascism's War" – nonetheless tragic – represents the Modernist crisis of the hero.

The last essay in this collection is an analysis of the paradigmatic short-circuit created by having different cultural and linguistic "homes". Kazuo Ishiguro is one of the most representative writers of the transnationalization between cultures, languages, ideologies. And ideological indeed is the essay by Wayne Pounds, who posits the author fully in the colonialist discourse. The analytical approach to three of Ishiguro's novels, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), and *The Remains of the Day* (1989), aims at the uncovering of the colonialist subtext in an author for whom writing about history is a way to create one's own history. In the discourse on the politics of Modernist representation and literary and physical positioning, *The Politics and Poetics of Displacement* offers a rich survey of fascinating aspects of little-known works, and new perspectives on more established kinds of heterotopias and dystopias, crossing boundaries and identities, Modernist in form, attitude, body, or spirit – a kaleidoscopic analysis of Modernism becoming Modernisms.

---

Edwina Keown and Carol Taaffe (eds) 2010. *Irish Modernism: Origins, Contexts, Publics*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Benjamin Keatinge  
South East European University, Macedonia

---

This new collection of essays on Irish modernism and Ireland in modernity stems from a conference held at Trinity College Dublin in October 2007. It is testimony to the diversity and depth of that conference that, even though the majority of papers delivered in 2007 are not included in this collection, the editors have nonetheless produced a broad and eclectic collection of essays. The subject of Irish modernism is not one that lends itself to neat, focused treatment. What, after all, are we to make of the massive panoply of possible topics and authors and the mixture of traditionalism and modernity which characterises Irish culture in the twentieth century? In order to lend coherence to a topic which potentially could spiral beyond manageable boundaries, the editors have provided the important subtitle to their book: "Origins, Contexts, Publics". In this context, the shifting boundaries of Irish modernism are explored in a way which acknowledges the contradictory impulses of individual writers but also the diversity of public and social opinion and reception. These contradictory impulses have a strong social dimension as can be seen, for example, in Ellen Rowley's description of a competition to build a new Catholic church in Clonskeagh, Co. Dublin in 1953. The winning, modernist design was over-ruled by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid and a less innovative church built instead, but the public debate surrounding the competition serves to illustrate what Rowley identifies as the "transitional modernism" of the period whereby the architectural competition highlights the competing impulses in Irish design and aesthetic reception.

A similar picture of modernist and modernising impulses circulating in tension with traditionalist assumptions emerges from other essays in this collection. One of the editors Edwina Keown cites a lesser-known novel by Elizabeth Bowen, *A World of Love* (1955), as a good example of "a decade of transitions" which sees the (by now) antiquated world of the Irish Big House pitched against the modernising efforts of Seán Lemass and his Shannon Development Scheme. The bright new world of Irish aviation sits uneasily (as Keown shows) against the decaying Big House of Bowen's novel. By contextualising Bowen's work in the light of actual social debates around Lemass' economic policies, McKeown is able to show how Irish society during the 1950s was a site of competing discourses of modernity which in Bowen's novel, are presented as "a splintered modernist allegory of Ireland at a cross-roads between the national and the international, between a hackneyed image of the past and the uncharted promise of the future."

The crossroads between national and international versions of modernism is one of the key features of this collection. Against the traditional assumptions of insularity during the period of The Emergency in the 1940s and views of the 1950s as a lost decade, this collection gives us a number of counter-examples which show that important cultural debates and counter-orthodoxies were in circulation during this period, the very period which is commonly seen as one of cultural atrophy and economic stagnation. One notable counter-example is the existence in wartime Dublin of the White Stag group of artists explored here in a revealing essay by Róisín Kennedy. The White Stag group was the subject of a major

exhibition in 2005 at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, as Kennedy's essay reminds us. The juxtaposition of continental or English refugee-artists like Basil Rákóczi onto the Irish art scene of the 1940s led to an almost comical clash of styles and artistic credos. Briefly, in wartime Dublin, the traditional annual exhibition of the Royal Hibernian Academy had to compete with exhibitions such as the Exhibition of Subjective Art, organised by the White Stag group in January 1944, along with the offerings of the Irish Exhibition of Living Art founded in 1943 leading to a *de facto* 'Salon des Refusés' in the wartime capital. The fact that the White Stag group shared some of the characteristics of *avant-garde* movements on the continent, a tendency to shock the public and to use manifestoes and theoretical journals to promote their work, led to some cultural debate and to a "dramatic increase in press coverage of visual art in this period" according to Kennedy. Furthermore, even though the group dispersed after 1945, they made a significant impact on important post-war Irish artists like Patrick Scott and Louis le Brocquy both of whom, as Kennedy notes, rejected formal academic art training in favour of their own "personal style". Thus in the most unpropitious of environments, a living artistic movement was able to broaden the horizons of Irish visual art in a way which exemplifies the international/local nature of Irish modernist praxis.

Four essays here deal with two contradictory figures in the Irish modernist pantheon: Brian O'Nolan (also known as Flann O'Brien and Myles na gCopaleen) and Thomas MacGreevy. Their consideration here perhaps represents the centrality of local/international as well as traditional/experimental paradigms in Irish modernist experience. The author of *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman* was capable of exhibiting a modernist/post-modernist sensibility in fiction while also representing the ironically presented views of the Plain People of Ireland in his "Cruiskeen Lawn" *Irish Times* column. Equally, Thomas MacGreevy's career paradigmatically represents, on the one hand, a continental receptiveness to modernist experiment; he was a close friend of Samuel Beckett and James Joyce and contributed an essay on "The Catholic Element in Work in Progress" to a volume defending what became *Finnegans Wake* to which Beckett also contributed. On the other hand, he returned to Dublin in 1941 to become Director of the National Gallery of Ireland in 1950 and as Rhiannon Moss notes: "his early role as a European modernist was superseded by the national and Catholic interests which dominated his thought after his decisive return to Ireland".

The full complexity of Irish modernism exists at this intersection of the Catholic and national with more European trends, a paradigm which, as this book shows, must allow for a mass of contradictions. There is no clear distinction between the work of expatriate modernists like Beckett and Joyce and the activities of those who stayed at home, notably Flann O'Brien. Nor can we make a clear linkage between Catholic and national since a certain Catholic internationalism can be seen at work in Joyce as well as poets Denis Devlin and Brian Coffey. Likewise, the national and the local can be a site of experimentation as in the work of an artist like Jack B. Yeats (on whom Beckett and MacGreevy famously disagreed) or indeed the later poetry of his brother, W.B. Yeats. Therefore, we must avoid what Beckett called, in his essay "Dante...Bruno...Vico ...Joyce", "the neatness of identifications".

In revising and resisting simplistic identifications of the local with the traditional and the modernist with the international, the editors of this volume have creditably expanded our view of the range, diversity and indeed, frankly contradictory, modes of Irish modernist experience. However, there remains a mildly troubling lack of cohesion in the essays as they are presented here which is the negative side effect of this volume's very diversity. The editors have loosely grouped the essays under four sub-headings: "Irish Modernism: Origins and

Contexts"; "Border Crossings: Ireland and Europe"; "Catholic Modernism in Ireland"; and "Evolving Irish Modernism: Literature, Visual Arts, Architecture". While it is true that many of the essays share "a historicist focus" (as the editors state in their Introduction) and there is a broadly chronological progression through the book starting with the 1913 Dublin Lockout and ending in the 1950s, the reader must nonetheless search hard to find any unifying thread or thematic logic here. In this respect, the first section of the book is perhaps guilty of a certain arbitrariness in locating the origins of modernism in Ireland. Should we view the 1913 Lockout, as Jean-Michel Rabaté suggests, as the moment that crystallises the way in which national and international tensions converged on the Irish cultural sphere in the ensuing three decades? How are we to view the little-known novelist Frank Mathew, the subject of Jim Shanahan's essay, as a modernist precursor? What is the relationship between the intense nationalism of Patrick Pearse and the attitudes of the expatriate Joyce who both shared pre-war dealings with the publisher Maunsel and Co., as discussed by Anne Markey in her essay "Modernism, Maunsel and the Irish Short Story"? These are all interesting questions that in a certain sense probe the borders between the international and local origins of Irish modernism. However, the contexts remain disparate.

These essays draw on contemporary theorizations of modernism that emphasise its local manifestations as being as important as international or transnational properties. Nationalism itself is, of course, a feature of modernity intrinsically linked to the bureaucratic and economic exigencies of the modern state. By aligning "Irish revivalists and international modernists" (as Anne Markey does in her comparison of Pearse and Joyce) and by making surprising linkages, such as Eamonn Hughes' use of Walter Benjamin to discuss "Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", these essays challenge oppositional assumptions which pitch Irish insularity against modernist trends. This is valuable and useful in helping us see an Ireland not quite as enclosed and cut-off as we had assumed. Nonetheless, the impression remains that modernism in Irish culture is highly fractured and inconsistent and therefore, writing about it runs the danger of mirroring that fragmentation. By trying to theorise or generalise its place and significance, we run-up, at the same time, against a welter of local detail which exhibits a startling diversity which feels at odds with any over-arching descriptive theory used to describe it. Equally, the great movements of Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism or big modernist statements like *The Waste Land*, *The Cantos* and *Ulysses* exhibit a decisive radicalism that contrasts with the Irish controversies and compromises described in this volume. Perhaps this sense of a modified and less ambitious modernism is what this book principally shows. If so, the conclusion we are led towards is that of a deeply resistant and fractured Irish locale in which a kind of fissured modernism was able to sustain itself only in a most tentative and contradictory way.

---

## Announcement from HDAS

After a brief illness, Prof. Ljiljana Ina Gjurgjan passed away on 23 September 2012. She was the Chairperson of the Croatian branch of ESSE and was co-editing a forthcoming issue of EJES. Her published works covered many areas such as Modernism, Romanticism and women's writing, and in the past few years she had been particularly interested in exploring possible dialogues between the literature and cultural experiences of Ireland and those of Croatian and other Central/Eastern European nations. ESSE offers its condolences to her family and colleagues.