

Anglophone experience, while in Estonia, for example, middlebrow was the only literature permitted to thrive under Communist rule. The media by which middlebrow culture was disseminated also differed: the Italian *fotoromanza* and Spanish cinema were important cultural media by virtue of high levels of illiteracy in those countries by the middle of the twentieth century.

Regarding the transmission of Anglophone texts into other languages, we heard about Stefan Heym's translation into German, and the differences between its reception as a thriller in English in the 1930s and as a postwar novel in the GDR; the extraordinary enthusiasm in Germany for the works of an unknown Anglo-Indian novelist of the early twentieth century; and the French assimilation of the *Scarlet Pimpernel*. Earlier Dutch research on the rise in literary class by Edgar Wallace, as a result of his being translated into Dutch, was referenced as one of the first explorations of Anglophone middlebrow in a language other than English.

The value of the conference was two-fold. It created a new network of European researchers who cross language and literature barriers to explore the phenomenon of middlebrow together. It opened up the field of enquiry to consider how politics, culture or language affects textual transmission. It also asked searching questions about the role of literacy and cultural tradition in the creation of literature. It also placed an emphasis on the stratification of culture within a society, and required us to consider more carefully how assumptions about readers and media can shape literature, as well as our response to it as researchers.

The relevance to ESSE of the study of non-English literatures is that these works of fiction and drama (also poetry) will be the works read by the grandparents of ESSE members, which have affected the cultural development of the ESSE community, as well as its approach to works from Anglophone literature. There are many connections across European literatures: researching middlebrow is one way to extend the development of comparative literature studies. ESSE members can help the European middlebrow project by notifying their colleagues who work in middlebrow of the existence of a semi-organised research group, and by directing them to its blog. In the near future, we hope to set up a listserv for interested researchers to use as a discussion zone. There are also more middlebrow conferences on the horizon, on English and non-English middlebrow fiction: 27-29 June 2014: *Inventing the Middlebrow* (St Paul, Minnesota), March 2015: *Imperial Middlebrow* (Paderborn, Germany), 2016: *European Middlebrow 2*.

REVIEWS

Wendy Anderson (ed.). 2013. *Language in Scotland: Corpus-Based Studies (Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature 19)*. Amsterdam/New York NY: Rodopi, 299 pp., ISBN 978-90-420-3718-2.

J. Lachlan Mackenzie
VU University Amsterdam & ILTEC Lisbon

Like most countries of Europe, Scotland shows a rich pattern of multilingualism. Alongside the three historical languages, Scots, Scottish English and Gaelic, as well as British Sign Language, recent immigration has brought speakers of Polish, Panjabi, Urdu, Arabic, Cantonese and French, to name but the most frequently spoken. The beautifully prepared book under review, with an Introduction, twelve chapters and an index, deals with only the three first-named and is wisely entitled *Language in Scotland*, implying a

focus on how languages are and have been used in Scottish society. Corpus linguistics is relatively speaking in its infancy in Scotland, so that the volume can do no more than offer a progress report, with an understandable emphasis on explaining and justifying methods rather than trumpeting definitive conclusions. With the community of Scottish corpus linguists still feeling their way, the individual chapters are quite diverse in nature. In her Introduction, Wendy Anderson bravely attempts to tie all the strands together, but is ultimately forced to admit that the book points the reader in a variety of directions.

One theme that does emerge from the collection is that in the Scottish environment corpora are at their most effective when used in conjunction with other tools (chiefly dictionaries, thesauri and text collections). The approach taken is thus always, as the subtitle indicates, ‘corpus-based’ rather than ‘corpus-driven’. One specific difficulty for the study of the Scots language is the lack of a fixed orthography, which causes major problems for automated searches: on p. 286, for example, twenty-seven variant spellings are shown for *sword* in the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (DOST)*, some of which themselves have optional letters. The use of a range of computational tools places a premium on ‘interoperability’, and the aggregation of digital resources has indeed been a major aim of work centred in Glasgow. The *Enroller* project, which was developed with this very purpose in mind, is presented in detail in the final chapter by Jean Anderson. These new resources, however, are not exploited in any of the preceding chapters. What is more, the researchers have made widely differing use of the corpora: while some have applied the techniques of corpus linguistics, exploiting corpora or subcorpora in their entirety, others have treated them merely as text collections without resorting to the methodology of corpus analysis.

The corpora mentioned in the book are the following; I have added the number of the chapters that use or at least mention each:

- CMSW, Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing (1,2,3,4,6,10,11)
- Corpas na Gàidhlig (5)
- Corpus de Theacsaichean Gàidhlig (5)
- Corpus of Nineteenth-century Scottish Correspondence (4)
- Corpus of Scottish Correspondence
- Edinburgh Corpus of Older Scots (10)
- Edinburgh Corpus of Spoken English
- Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots (3,6,10,11)
- SCOTS, Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech (3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12)

The three languages dealt with in the volume, Scots, Scottish English and Gaelic, co-exist in Scotland in a manner that essentially has not changed for centuries: while there is a sharp divide between the Celtic language Gaelic and the other two, there is a ‘continuum’ (p. 13) between Scots and Scottish English (i.e. the English spoken and written in Scotland). As Marina Dossena, former editor of this newsletter, has observed, the relation between the two is not one of code-switching, but of ‘stylistic adjustments to context, topic and interlocutor encompass[ing] different aspects of both codes at the same time’ (Dossena 2005: 153). The range of possibilities this permits is very much present in various chapters of the volume.

Chapter 1 (Jeremy J. Smith) offers a qualitative analysis of two letters by Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll, showing how, in typical 18th-century fashion, he used punctuation in his writing to indicate pauses in how the letters would be read aloud.

Although the author of the letters is a Scot, these are written in Standard English; the CMSW is merely used as a source for the two letters. This article thus makes for a rather unusual kick-off in not containing much that is specific to Scotland or a methodology that can be regarded as representative of corpus analysis.

The CMSW is also used, in the same inessential way, in Chapter 2 (Jennifer Bann). It is concerned with the use of legal terminology in non-judicial situations (specifically in the administrative prose found in documentation of university disciplinary procedures). The major finding is that there is little difference, except for a few terms, between Scottish and comparable Standard English documents. The author admits that the scope of the research is still too narrow.

Represented in the same corpus are the spelling practices of two leading writers of the 18th century, Allan Ramsay and Robert Burns; these are analysed in Chapter 3 (John Corbett). His results point to the prevalence of hybridity in their orthographic choices, yielding a complex system that permits and even welcomes variation. In the course of his sophisticated analysis of phoneme-grapheme correspondences, Corbett revisits many of the problems associated with the identification of Scots as a language. Notably, he mounts a defence of the oft-maligned ‘apologetic apostrophe’ (the use of which originates with Ramsay, cf. Corbett, McClure & Stuart-Smith 2003: 12), pointing out that, for instance, the spelling <ha’e> for Scots *hae* or English *have* acknowledges the hybridity of the modern language.

Chapter 4 (Marina Dossena) looks at register in the English of 19th-century letters from Scotland. While her analysis of these ego documents gives a subtle account of the flexibility of usage, she turns up little that is characteristically Scottish (except perhaps for the use of Scots in quotations of direct speech), inspiring her to call for more parallel corpora to permit a more revealing comparison of Scottish and English epistolary style.

The only chapter in the book to deal with Gaelic is Chapter 5 (Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh). In contrast to the preceding chapters, we here have a classic example of corpus research, with a well-conducted study of the use of singular nouns after cardinal numerals. Standard grammars prescribe singular number after *aon* ‘one’, the vestigial dual after *dà* ‘two’ and the plural after 3 to 10. The author sets out the complex situation prevalent in Old Gaelic, the simplification noticeable in Middle Gaelic, the major patterns of Classical Gaelic and the above-mentioned simple rule of Modern Gaelic, which corpus analysis however reveals to have several exceptions. The commonest of these involve the most frequent collocates of the numerals; these collocates are classified semantically, and explanations are proffered for the remaining exceptions. This chapter, the most substantial of the volume, also offers a useful overview of corpora and text archives of Gaelic, describes the creation of a new corpus and argues for the provision of detailed grammatical resources for intermediate or advanced learners and native speakers.

Chapter 6 (Christian Kay) is a study of the survival until the early 17th century of Germanic kinship terms in Scots, e.g. *eem* (in various spellings) for ‘uncle’, cf. Dutch *oom*, German archaic *Oheim*. Ironically, the dictionary proved more useful for the research than the corpora, which happened to contain too few kinship words (p. 155). The chapter shows that forms like *auld-mither* for ‘grandmother’, although purely Germanic, are relatively recent formations. The longer survival in Scotland of the ancient forms is ascribed to the cognitive prominence of kinship at a time when family bonds tempered feudal loyalties.

A corpus-based comparative analysis of the light verb construction (e.g. *have a look*, *gie a lowp*) in the British National Corpus and SCOTS is carried out in Chapter 7

(Silke Höche and Arian Shahrokny-Prehn). The authors take a generally Construction Grammar approach and are sensitive to the controversy about the analysis of the third element as a noun or verb stem; they plump for the latter analysis, but fail to note that some of their examples have a clear noun (e.g. *hae a dram*), while others have the diminutive noun suffix *-ie* (*gie X a kissie*). They observe much greater relative frequency of the construction in SCOTS but wisely attribute this to the nature of the two corpora compared: SCOTS has proportionately twice as much spoken data as well as more informal contents. This is a well set-up piece of research.

Another fine example of corpus-based research is offered in Chapter 8 (Joan Cutting), which considers the occurrence of vague language in spoken Scottish English, e.g. vague items like *thingmy*, vague modifiers like *a bit* or vague extenders like *and stuff like that*. Little is found that is specific to Scottish English. However, Cutting offers a concentrated but persuasive discussion of the relation between the two Germanic languages of Scotland, citing evidence against the assumption that Scottish people use English in writing and Scots in speech; rather English expressions are preferred in interactive contexts, with 'dense' Scots being reserved for literary writing.

In Chapter 9, Wendy Anderson turns to metaphors, which are fiendishly hard to identify using corpus searches; the author offers a good treatment of the literature on this thorny problem. She argues for a basket of methodologies, including old-fashioned manual searching. Her results are suggestive for future work, but as presented here they are not spectacular, nor do they reveal any specific characteristics of Scottish English.

Chapter 10 (Christine Robinson) takes the lexicographer's view, arguing that there are multiple methods for compiling dictionaries and that the newly available corpora have a role to play in this work. She suggests that a rich dictionary like *DOST* can, in an inversion of the argument, be used as a corpus. A resonating observation is that there is currently no dictionary of Scots that is not restricted to entries specific to Scots; consequently, there is no basis for making spell checkers or for developing machine translation. It is hard to imagine a Catalan-to-Spanish dictionary excluding all words that are orthographically identical in the two languages!

The infrastructure of corpus analysis is presented in Chapters 11 and 12. The first (David Beavan) sets out the history of corpus construction in Scotland, with a considerable amount of technical detail that inspires confidence as well as being of potential use to other corpus builders. The second (Jean Anderson) describes the Enroller project mentioned above.

Language in Scotland gives a good picture of the research into Scottish linguistic issues currently under way at home and abroad. Scotland's investment in corpus data will be essential for the generation of the tools needed for integration into the electronic media of the future. The emphasis on the accessibility and interoperability of the resources is key to the continued vitality of Scots and Gaelic, now minority languages in the country where they arose.

References

- Corbett, John, J. Derrick McClure & Jane Stuart-Smith. 2003. A brief history of Scots. In John Corbett, J. Derrick McClure & Jane Stuart-Smith (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Scots*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 1-16.
- Dossena, Marina. 2005. *Scotticisms in Grammar and Vocabulary*. Edinburgh: Birlinn.

Martin Procházka, Ondřej Pilný (eds.). 2012. *Prague English Studies and the Transformation of Philologies*. Prague: Karolinum Press, 218 pp., ISBN:978-80-246-2156-2.

Andrei A. Avram
University of Bucharest

Given the role played by the Prague Linguistic Circle in the emergence and development of structuralism, it is, of course, not surprising that its foundational texts and other major writings have been collected in anthologies (e.g. Vachek 1964, Steiner 1982, Vachek and Dušková 1983, Luesldorff, Ponevová and Sgall 1994), that its conceptual apparatus and terminology have been discussed in dictionaries (e.g. Vachek 1960), while its essential tenets and methods of analysis have been the subject matter of books on the theory and practice of the Prague Linguistic Circle (e.g. Vachek 1966, Tobin 1988, Luelsdorff 1994, and, more recently, Procházka, Malá and Šaldová 2010) or of some of its prominent members (e.g. Burbank and Steiner 1978, Toman 1995).

Under the circumstances, it has to be said from the outset that *Prague English Studies and the Transformation of Philologies* is not a mere addition to the already rich body of literature on the Prague School. It was published on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of English studies at Charles University in Prague, whose first Professor of English Language and Literature was Vilém Mathesius, much better known internationally as the initiator of the Prague Linguistic Circle and as a linguist. The book under review looks into both these facets of Mathesius's work as well as into his influence on a number of followers, and, in doing so, it also does justice to the intriguing plural "philologies" in the title. However, as explicitly mentioned in Martin Procházka's "Introduction", the book "does not pretend to list, explain and define all relevant aspects of the transformation of philology within the development of Prague English Studies and in the broader framework of Prague Structuralism" (20).

The volume is divided into two parts, both consisting of five chapters. The first part, entitled "Legacies: Vilém Mathesius and Followers", examines the relevance of Mathesius's work for literary and translation studies; the second part, "Contexts and Outcomes: From Prague Structuralism to Radical Philology", looks at the genesis of the structuralism of the Prague Linguistic Circle as well as into its implications for a number of selected domains.

In the first chapter, "The Value of Language Rhetoric, Semiology, Philology and the Functional Approach", Martin Procházka analyzes Mathesius's synchronic and functional approach in relation to topics such as the epistemological implications of arbitrariness in Aristotle's rhetoric, the humanistic philology of the 15th century humanist Lorenzo Valla, Friedrich Schlegel's Romantic philology, the so-called *Junggrammatiker*, and Ferdinand de Saussure's semiology. Also discussed and contextualized are some key concepts, e.g. the notions of "functional styles of language", "dynamic stability", and the integration by Mathesius of Romantic and contemporary biological views of the nation – the "organic community" and "national biology" – into his version of functionalism.

The second chapter, "Vilém Mathesius as Literary Historian", by Helena Znojemská, deals with Mathesius's views on aesthetics and literary criticism. Mathesius is widely known to have been a linguist, but relatively few are aware that he is also the author of a *History of English Literature*, considered to be the foundational act of Prague English Studies. The chapter discusses Mathesius's thoughts on issues such as the nature

of critical judgement, the functions of literary criticism, and the methodology of literary criticism. It also identifies possible connections between Mathesius' conception of the nature of literary works and the theoretically far more articulated views of two other well-known members of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Jan Mukařovský and René Wellek.

Bohuslav Mánek's "Vilém Mathesius as Translator and Theoretician of Translation" is an analysis of Mathesius' main translations, i.e. H. G. Wells's *An Englishman Looks at the World* and a selection from Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, as well as of his views on translation. Mathesius as both a theoretician and a practitioner of translation is discussed within the context of Czech translation theory and practice.

In "A Structuralist History of Zdeněk Vančura", Pavla Veselá examines the convoluted trajectory of Zdeněk Vančura, a Czech scholar of English and especially of American literature, and a former student of Vilém Mathesius's. This chapter maps the evolution of Vančura's views from his first writings – bearing the combined imprint of Russian formalism, Prague structuralism and Mathesius's functional approach – to his later works, after the Communist take-over in 1948, which attest not only to his efforts to renounce structuralism under the ideological pressure of the totalitarian regime, but also to a switch to a predominantly psychological and biographical approach.

The first part of the volume ends with a chapter on another former student of Vilém Mathesius's. In "Jaroslav Hornát's Critical Method in his Studies of Charles Dickens", Zdeněk Beran focuses on the influence exerted by two members of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Jan Mukařovský and Felix Vodička, on Hornát's interpretation of Dickens. It is shown that the former's theory of "norm" and the latter's concept of "concretization" as well as their elaboration of the relation holding between *fabula* and *sujet* (first examined by the Russian formalists) played a significant role in Hornát's approach to literary criticism, which combines structuralist and Marxist methods.

The second part of the volume opens with Robert J. C. Young's contribution, "Structuralism and the Prague Linguistic Circle Revisited"; it is an authoritative and fascinating reconstruction of the historical context in which the Prague Linguistic Circle was founded and of its ideological underpinnings. Operating with the instruments of post-colonial studies and critical theory, the chapter essentially proposes an interpretation of the structuralism of the Prague Linguistic Circle as not simply a methodology of analysis (in phonology, morphology and poetics, to name but a few domains), but rather as a cultural project, intellectually related to anti-colonial and anti-ethnocentric (and in particular anti-Eurocentric) thought in the first half of the 20th century. The examination of the various ideological threads gathered in the structuralism of the Prague Linguistic Circle is therefore much more profound and much wider in scope than other overviews (e.g. Trnka 1948/1966), restricted to a discussion of philological and linguistic theories. The issues covered range from the Eurasian movement (of which Nikolai Trubetzkoy was the acknowledged leader), through the critique of Eurocentrism, the idea of cultural mixture and its offshoot the *Sprachbund*, to a discussion of the theories and methods of the Soviet linguist Nikolai Marr, contextualized and compared to the views on linguistic convergence of two of the most prominent members of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Nikolai Trubetzkoy and Roman Jakobson.

The following chapter, "Functional Linguistics as the 'Science of Poetic Forms': An ABC of the Prague Linguistic Circle's Poetics", by David Vichnar, is concerned with the main tenets on poetics of the Prague Linguistic Circle. The chapter reassesses the part played by Vilém Mathesius in the emergence and elaboration of the poetic theory of two other members of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Bohuslav Havránek and Jan Mukařovský.

Both Havránek's thoughts on the "standard language" and Mukařovský's functionalist aesthetics and views on "poetic language" vs. the "standard language" appear to have found a source of inspiration in Mathesius's conception of functional linguistics and in his impassionate appeal for "the new science of poetics".

In "A Gateway to a Baroque Rhetoric of Jacques Lacan and Niklas Luhmann", Erik S. Roraback analyzes the ideological content and the rhetoric of a number of selected works by the French theoretician of psychoanalysis Jacques Lacan and of the German system theorist Niklas Luhmann. The ultimate aim of this chapter is to suggest an interpretation of rhetoric in Lacan's and Luhmann's works, seeking to provide an answer to the question whether their rhetoric is simply an instrument or rather an end in itself. In addition to illustrating the intellectual debt of both these thinkers to Edmund Husserl, the analysis highlights unexpected parallels with the views held by the Prague philosopher Ladislav Rieger and by Vilém Mathesius.

Ondřej Pilný's "Jan Grossman, Structuralism and the Grotesque" discusses how the structuralist method is reflected both in the activity of one of the most influential Czech theatre directors and in his essays. A promoter of the theatre of the absurd, Jan Grossman staged, among other plays, Alfred Jarry's *Ubu roi*, an adaptation of Franz Kafka's *The Trial* and Václav Havel's *The Memorandum*. He was also the author of a number of essays on the theatre. Although he had been a student of, among others, Jan Mukařovský, Grossman distanced himself from the latter and his essays express views that can be traced back to those espoused by Vilém Mathesius.

In the last chapter, "Attesting / Before the Fact", Louis Armand attempts to demonstrate, from the perspective of the so-called "radical philology", the "incompleteness" of language, and, by way of consequence, the "vague" nature of philology as a system of knowledge. On this view, signs and symbols cannot be distinguished from facts, and this contradicts the principle of verifiability. Also discussed is the concept of "signifying materiality" in Jacques Lacan's and Jacques Derrida's works.

Most edited volumes cannot gather studies of equal value and insightfulness or cater to all expectations. The volume reviewed here is no exception. Two papers – Martin Procházka's and, in particular, Robert J. C. Young's – stand out with their wider scope and illuminating analyses, whereas some of the other contributions are – although understandably so – of a rather local interest, and are less likely to fully engage an international readership. Also, the present reviewer would have expected a chapter on Vilém Mathesius's legacy in the field of English linguistics as well. Here and there, the reader might occasionally choose to disagree with some statements, such as Young's unsubstantiated claim that "one of the most significant results of the Russian revolution internationally was that for the first time in modern history a major state was anti-imperialistic" (124). A more serious objection would be that the last chapter does not appear to be connected in any way to the rest of the volume. Indeed, absolutely no reference is made to and no link is established with either Vilém Mathesius's works or the Prague Linguistic School. The attempt by one of the editors to account for its inclusion in the volume by writing that "although these issues were not directly addressed by Prague Structuralists, they were arguably anticipated by them, especially in Mukařovský's analysis of 'unintentionality'" (20) is not really helpful or convincing.

The critical comments above should not be seen as diminishing in any way the overall value of this volume. To conclude, *Prague English Studies and the*

Transformation of Philologies lives up to its title and sheds light on many hitherto lesser known aspects of the intellectual history of Prague English Studies.

References

- Burbank, John and Peter Steiner (eds.) 1978. *Structure, Signs and Function: Selected Essays by Jan Mukařovský*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Luelsdorff, Philip A. (ed.) 1994. *The Prague School of Structuralist and Functional Linguistics*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Luelsdorff, Philip A., Jarmila Ponevová and Peter Sgall (eds.) 1994. *Praguiana 1945–1990*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Procházka, Martin, Markéta Malá and Pavlína Šaldová (eds.) 2010. *The Prague School and Theories of Structure*. Göttingen: V & R UniPress.
- Steiner, Peter (ed.) 1982. *The Prague School: Selected Writings, 1929–1946*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Tobin, Yishai (ed.) 1988. *The Prague School and its Legacy: In Linguistics, Literature, Semiotics, Folklore, and the Arts*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Toman, Jindřich. 1995. *The Magic of a Common Language: Jakobson, Mathesius, Trubetzkoy, and the Prague Linguistic Circle*. Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press.
- Trnka, Bohumil. 1966 (1948). "Linguistics and the Ideological Structure of the Period", in Joseph Vachek, *The Linguistic School of Prague. An Introduction to its Theory and Practice*. Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, pp. 152-165.
- Vachek, Joseph. 1960. *Dictionnaire de linguistique de l'École de Prague*. Utrecht and Antwerp: Spectrum.
- Vachek, Joseph (ed.) 1964. *A Prague School Reader in Linguistics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Vachek, Joseph. 1966. *The Linguistic School of Prague. An Introduction to its Theory and Practice*. Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press.
- Vachek, Joseph and Libuše Dušková (eds.) 1983. *Praguiana: Some Basic and Less Known Aspects of the Prague Linguistic School*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Jonathan Culpeper (ed.) 2011. *Historical Sociopragmatics. Benjamins Current Topics, 31*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 135 pp., ISBN 9789027202505.

Polina Shvanyukova
Università di Bergamo, Italy

Historical Sociopragmatics, edited by Jonathan Culpeper, is the book format version of a special issue of "Journal of Historical Pragmatics" 10(2), originally published in 2009. The volume includes a theoretical introduction, followed by five analytical contributions written by leading scholars in the field. In the introductory chapter the editor emphasizes the difficulty of providing a clear-cut definition of the discipline, given that "any aspect of the social context that is specific to the pragmatic meaning of particular language use" is of interest to social pragmaticians (1). According to Culpeper, the introduction of sociopragmatic approaches to the study of historical corpora would help to shed light on the ways in which more general, conventionalized linguistic norms could be re-negotiated and transformed by individual speakers who sought to achieve specific communication goals. It is the analysis of communication goals investigated in their broader social contexts that would contribute to gaining a better understanding of the complex interrelationship between local language use, shaped by a specific social context, and the mechanisms of re-shaping the social context through re-negotiation of linguistic norms.

The five analytical contributions convincingly implement different methodological toolkits in the analysis of historical language use as embedded in specific situational contexts. The corpora under investigation comprise fifteenth- and eighteenth-century personal correspondence, Late Modern English journals, as well as samples taken from the Corpus of Early English Correspondence (CEEC) and the Sociopragmatics Corpus (1640-1760). The scholars draw on an impressive number of different theoretical approaches that include critical discourse analysis, frame analysis, relevance theory, integrationist social theory, to mention just a few. The contributions demonstrate how a range of quantitative, qualitative or a combination of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies can be applied to the study of the processes of constructing pragmatic meanings in various types of historical written discourse.

Johanna L. Wood starts her chapter, entitled “Structures and expectations. A systematic analysis of Margaret Paston's formulaic and expressive language”, by presenting a methodological toolkit for a systematic analysis of fifteenth-century personal correspondence. Wood stresses the importance of providing full social contextualization of the letters under investigation. She successfully adapts Norman Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis (1992), expanding it with the help of research on frame analysis produced by Deborah Tannen (1993). In the case of Margaret Paston's letters to her sons, social status, religion and gender represent three major social domains of that particular historical period, which exercise foremost influence on linguistic choices adopted by the encoder. The sophistication of Wood's model allows her to carefully differentiate between the micro- and macro-levels of the analysis of the letters. By proceeding from macro- to micro- textual analysis, Wood is able to offer convincing results as regards the key issue of data reliability that often undermines research on written historical sources. While Paston employed scribes for writing her correspondence, textual evidence in the form of metapragmatic comments, and evaluative language use, documented in the concluding part of the chapter supports Wood's claims that it is the female encoder's, and not the scribes', voice and viewpoint that the letters can help us reconstruct.

Susan M. Fitzmaurice presents the findings of a qualitative pragmatic study of private correspondence in “The sociopragmatics of a lovers spat. The case of the eighteenth-century courtship letters of Mary Pierrepont and Edward Wortley”. The main goal pursued in the study is to identify the mechanism of the pragmatic coding of implicature and inference. Similarly to the model of analysis proposed by Wood, Fitzmaurice identifies three different contextual layers that constitute the wider historical embedding of the letters. The contextual layers in question are identified as the local (i.e., “the cotext created by the discourse of the letter”), the situational (which refers to the entire correspondence exchange the individual letters make part of), and the broader historical contexts (38). Fitzmaurice employs qualitative methods on a sample of four letters in order to uncover specific pragmatic meanings and shed light on the complexity of the sociopragmatic roles performed by the two lovers in this illicit letter exchange. Drawing on relevance theory, Fitzmaurice is able to differentiate between particular pragmatic subroutines that provide the basis for construction of pragmatic meanings. This operation allows the scholar to trace specific communication goals pursued by the interlocutors, documenting the complexities of negotiating a love relationship in a specific historical time.

The use of referential terms in LME letters and journals is the focus of the investigation undertaken by Minna Nevala in the third analytical chapter of the volume,

entitled “Altering distance and defining authority. Person reference in Late Modern English”. More specifically, the author investigates the employment of the term “friend” in the corpus, with a view to determining the mechanisms of the linguistic encoding of social identities and interpersonal relationships. The corpus in question comprises letters written by the members of the Lunar Society of Birmingham, together with samples taken from the private correspondence and journals that belong to a female eighteenth-century governess. Conventionalized use of person reference, according to Nevala, represents a key constitutive part of complying with the established hierarchical structure of a given society. The comparative approach presented in the chapter allows the scholar to pinpoint specific social and contextual aspects that have decisive impact on linguistic choices made in “public” as well as in more “private, ordinary” sources (63).

Minna Palander-Collin devotes her chapter “Variation and change in patterns of self-reference in early English correspondence” to the correspondence of gentlemen who lived in Early and Late Modern English. The aim of this contribution is twofold. First of all, the scholar looks for examples of self-reference in personal letters in order to establish “what gentlemen of the Early and Late Modern England could say about themselves in the first person” (83). In the second stage of the investigation, the focus shifts to the diachronic changes in the choice of linguistic strategies of self-reference that are under comparison in the samples written in the period from 1500 to 1799. Palander-Collin employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, paying special attention to recurrent word clusters extrapolated from the Corpus of Early English Correspondence with the help of WordSmith Tools. The scholar is able to trace a significant increase in the use of the first person in the corpus by the eighteenth century. This growth can be explained by its relationship with the major contemporary socio-cultural development, designated, for example, by Burke (2000) as a “shift towards informality” (103).

The final contribution in the volume, co-authored by Dawn Archer and Jonathan Culpeper, addresses the task of “Identifying *key* sociophilological usage in plays and trial proceeding (1640-1760). An empirical approach via corpus annotation”. Here the two scholars introduce and demonstrate the applicability of the approach to the study of historical pragmatics labelled as “sociophilology”. It is explained that a sociophilological approach “is characterised by a context-to-form/function methodological point of departure and a theoretically-informed concern with local conditions of language use” (126). Archer and Culpeper propose a method of studying interactions between two participants of different social status, such as, for example, servants communicating with masters. In order to perform the analysis of different types of social dyads, two corpus linguistics techniques, corpus annotation and the so called keyness analysis, are employed in the study. More specifically, keyness analysis is used to identify statistically relevant parts of speech and semantic fields employed by a particular social role dyad. With the help of these two techniques, it is possible to detect both specific style markers associated with hierarchical social relationships and deviation of local contextual norms from more general norms (111). According to the authors, the development of a more sophisticated computer-aided program for grammatical and semantic annotation of historical data would simplify the task of historical sociopragmatics and enable the processing of much larger corpora. In the concluding part of the chapter, the scholars present preliminary conclusions as regards specific linguistic patterns of the second person pronoun usage observed in the corpus under investigation.

Overall, the volume is exceptionally rich in the range of approaches and concrete case-studies that demonstrate how different theoretical frameworks and methodological tools can be applied in a historical sociopragmatic investigation of written corpora.

Should the contributors decide to compile a second volume on the subject, an expanded general theoretical introduction would be most welcome, especially for the benefit of students with an interest in field of historical sociopragmatics. Likewise, given that four out of five contributions to the volume include private or official correspondence in the researched corpus, a volume dedicated specifically to historical sociopragmatic analysis of letter-writing practices would undoubtedly contribute further to advancing the profile of historical sociopragmatics.

References

- Burke, Peter. 2000. A Civil Tongue: Language and Politeness in Early Modern Europe. In Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (eds.). *Civil Histories. Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 31-48.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tannen, Deborah. 1993. What's in a frame? Surface evidence for underlying expectations. In Deborah Tannen, (ed.). *Framing in Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 14-56.

David F. Waterman 2009. *Pat Barker and the Mediation of Social Reality*. New York: Cambria Press, 230 pp. ISBN 9781604976496.

Diana Popa
University of St Andrews, Scotland

The publication of David Waterman's *Pat Barker and the Mediation of Social Reality* undertakes the difficult task of adding to the already impressive scholarship on Pat Barker, one of the well-known contemporary British novelists, whose novels - varied in theme and style - defy categorisation. The present volume's stated intent is "to read Pat Barker through the lens of social representation theory" (xiv). Waterman's interest in social representation theory is indebted to the work of Serge Moscovici, but the contributions of Emile Durkheim, Antonio Gramsci and others cannot be overlooked. Waterman's book takes the form of a sustained argument for the constructed nature of social realities, which, in the work of Pat Barker, becomes a problem of representation. Waterman wants to show that, although the novels are different in themes and go beyond their regional, class, or thematic settings, one unifying aspect is the way in which dominant social realities – that is, sanctioned by institutions of power, such as the institution of psychiatry – are questioned from the point of view of the marginalised.

The first chapter, entitled "Caging or Community? The 'Working Class' Novels", discusses novels such as *Union Street*, *Blow Your House Down* and *The Century's Daughter* (later known as *Liza's England*), in which we hear voices from communities that are seldom heard (17). Chapters two and three, with the suggestive titles "Seeking 'Normality' in a World of Fictions: The *Man Who Wasn't There*" and "Heroic Masculinity and the Enemy Within: the *Regeneration* Trilogy", tackle ideas of masculinity by asking questions about what it means to be a man in the absence of a father (*The Man Who Wasn't There*) or in times of national crisis such as war (the *Regeneration* trilogy). One of the strengths of this volume is the way that Waterman constantly builds and sustains a dialogue with engaging and well-informed studies of Barker (especially those of Sharon Monteith and John Brannigan). At the same time, this effort to refer in detail to earlier studies clutters the text and makes Waterman's argument rather difficult to follow.

Applying social representation theory to the literary work of Pat Barker risks inviting some of the controversy generated by Moscovici's theory, which "received extensive criticism, particularly within the British context" (Voelklein and Howarth 2005: 3). The most frequent criticism of the theory of social representation is that it is too broad and too vague. Stronger criticism does not even consider it a theory, or as Potter and Litton put it, it seems to be "a concept in search of theory" (qtd in Voelklein and Howarth 2005: 8). Yet the working class novels have a lot to gain from this approach: we, as readers, understand the complexity of the social realities that lie behind Barker's novels. The least likely social group – the working class – supports and maintains the status quo. Waterman insists: "it must be recognised that subjects collaborate in their own domination by reproducing systemic exploitation in their social behaviour" (62).

Less successful, in my opinion, is the attempt to apply a similar reading to the *Regeneration* trilogy, which won the attention of readers and criticism alike and made Pat Barker the celebrated writer that she is today. Unlike her previous work, in which characters spoke in recognisably working-class dialects from northern England, in the *Regeneration* trilogy the author gives voice to characters that are marginalised not by social position, but by more subtle social pressures. Ideas of heroic masculinity, especially in times of war, clash with the reality of life on the front. Tensions at the heart of the concept of masculinity open up new spaces from where dominant social realities can be fruitfully challenged. It is at this point that Waterman's best intentions fall short. In applying a theory evenly to Barker's entire work in order to reveal the constructed nature of reality, and exploring the ways in which she undertakes the difficult task of "best represent[ing] the kinds of human experiences that resist representation" (3), Waterman acknowledges why the writer cannot be typecast as northern, regional, working class or feminist and points out that her approach goes against idealistic descriptions of "easy community" (Monteith, qtd in Waterman, 7). However, he fails to explain the complexity of Barker's war trilogy and arrives at general conclusions, such as "The *Regeneration* trilogy describes the consequences that people suffer when they refuse to accept their assigned subject position" (90) or "Reality must be understood as dynamic, always evolving, within a given socio-historical context, never forgetting the role of power within the formula" (91).

With all its strengths and its failings Waterman's book is a welcome contribution to the body of literature on Barker. Refreshingly, it refers to Barker's work as a whole, thereby going against the canonising tendency of equating an author with his/her most well-known and acclaimed works. *Pat Barker and the Mediation of Social Reality* should be of great interest, especially to undergraduate and graduate students, not only due to its multidisciplinary aspect (the unique use of social representation theory in reading novels), but also for its extensive bibliographical list of earlier scholarship on Barker (including relevant interviews), indicating the depth of research undertaken by Waterman.

References

- Voelklein, Corina and Caroline Howarth. 2005. A review of controversies about social representations theory: a British debate, 1-29. Pre-publication copy, Available in LSE Research Online August 2012, at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/2439/1/Libfile_repository_Content_Howarth%2C%20C_A%20review%20of%20controversies%20about%20social%20representations%20theory_A%20review%20of%20controversies%20about%20social%20representations%20theory%20%28LSE%20RO%29.pdf Last accessed 26.03.2014.

Michael Myer, ed. *Word & Image in Colonial and Postcolonial Literature and Cultures*. Rodopi: Amsterdam and New York, 2009, 379 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-2743-5.

Eoghan Smith
Carlow College, Ireland

Word & Image in Colonial and Postcolonial Literature and Cultures is a collection arising from the 2006 conference of the Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English (ASNEL) Conference, held in University of Koblenz-Landau. ASNEL is an association catering for postcolonial studies in German speaking countries. Consequently, these papers offer an interesting insight into the recent state of German-based scholarship in postcolonial studies in English-language cultural production. On this offering, the condition of that field of research appears vibrant and healthy: *Word & Image* is a dynamic collection of essays that showcases the extraordinary range of postcolonial scholarship in German universities.

In this collection, containing articles which deal with the history of visual representations of *The Tempest*'s Caliban to the 1995 revisionist Western *Dead Man*, scholars of English postcolonial studies, sociology, art history and media studies will find plenty of provocative and engaging material. The central point of concern - the fruitful nexus between literature and visual cultures - confirms that postcolonial studies continues to be one of the most productive interdisciplinary areas for the exploration of historically shaped cultural, racial and political legacies.

The authors of the papers consider the cultural and racial ideologies of representation in a variety of aesthetic forms in the Anglophone world, spanning a period from British colonial expansion in the sixteenth century to the present. Essays examine visual artforms such as painting, film and photography, the literary arts of theatre, fiction and poetry, and lesser-explored areas such as contemporary pop music and newspaper cartoons, all within the global reach of British colonies.

Such an ambitiously large project will necessarily contain elisions, and yet *Word and Image* offers a fascinating glimpse of the variety of material and research currently under investigation. The overarching theme in *Word & Image* is the difficulties in constructions of Otherness, with several authors arguing that our historically produced global racial and cultural figurations are complex and evade unitary narratives. Naturally, Edward Said's theoretical innovations continues to be a presence strongly felt in these essays, as does the work of Roland Barthes, who, as perhaps the most quoted theorist throughout the collection, shows his enduring influence on continental European frameworks of understanding the ideological structures of cultural production.

These papers collectively attempt to piece together a picture of the construction of race and culture in postcolonial societies. Yet, they inevitably must yield to the impossibility of historical reconstruction; those who try to catch the moment as it passes are too schooled in the black arts of deconstruction to allow complete narratives to emerge. What *Word & Image* emphasises - indeed, on this account, what German postcolonial studies emphasise - is the impossibility of a definitive interpretation of history, language or visual cultures. Yet, some truth or other begs to be established. Consequently, since it has become an established truth in Western epistemology that knowledge is a cultural construct, the logic of structuralism dominates *Word & Image*; hence we find the prevalence of Barthes. As with all socio-political fields, postcolonial studies lays bare the ideological algorithms underpinning narratives and images. Indeed

there are moments in these essays where racial constructions are untangled by their enquirers with mathematical precision, a feature of socio-linguistic structuralist thought that has given postcolonial studies the scientific power to secularise aesthetics.

The table of contents divides the collection into “Colonial Representations” and “Postcolonial Representations”. This named, neat division hides another. The section on “Postcolonial Representations” is broadly organised into three further distinct, though unacknowledged, groupings: representation of modern African cultures, representations of Asian/British-Asian cultures, and what might be termed representations of the New World (Canada, the U.S.A., Australia and New Zealand). The editor, Michael Meyer, has sought not to make these otherwise and apparent postcolonial geographical distinctions more explicit, for unspecified reasons. This minor editorial oddity aside, *Word & Image* boasts many fine examples of postcolonial scholarship.

The opening section, “Colonial Representations”, offers four essays on the construction of otherness in British colonial times. Daniel Jaczminski’s “Liberating the Strange Fish: Visual Representations of Caliban and Their Successive Emancipation from Shakespeare’s Original Text” traces through depictions of Caliban the politico-historicity of textual and visual interpretation in the production of race and culture. This essay sets the tone for the remainder of the collection. Strong essays by Peter Wagner and Patricia Plummer on Hogarth’s paintings of Africans in eighteenth century England, and nineteenth-century images of the Harem respectively, trace the political and gendered complexity of Orientalism in those defining centuries of British imperialism and their enduring influence today.

Of the five essays that deal with African artworks, four focus specifically on South Africa, surely an indication of the growing interest in that post-apartheid nation in postcolonial studies. The predominant theme in these essays is the inconsistencies and ironies of the image of the Rainbow Nation and the reality of social and economic division in South African society. Both Sonja Altnöder and Marita Wenzel draw attention to the tensions in calling the new South Africa into being through image and narrative. Altnöder’s analysis of political cartoonist Zapiro in “A Black and White Nation: The ‘New’ South Africa in Zapiro’s Cartoons” reveals a deep scepticism towards the official gestures towards a post-racial society, while on the other hand, Wenzel suggests that in the work of novelist, poet and playwright Zakes Mda, the end of apartheid opens up a space for re-imagining South African identity. Such divergence in perspective reinforces the overall sense that even the most immediate of racial and cultural experiences evade strict narrativisation. A further welcome intervention is the inclusion of Susan Arndt’s essay “Whiteness as a Category of Literary Analysis: Racializing Markers and *Race-Evasiveness* in J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*”. Drawing on the growing field of Critical Whiteness Studies, Arndt’s essay is a subtle investigation of the complex semiotics of whiteness in South Africa’s most celebrated writer.

Three essays look at the postcolonial encounter between Britain and South East Asia from a contemporary perspective. In particular, these essays display a shift from the interrogation of British Orientalism to the more fluid, contemporary perspectives of postcolonial cultures in South East Asia and the reinterpretation of Britishness as negotiated by the Asian diaspora in present-day Britain. Lucia Kramer provides a lucid and fascinating investigation of Orientalism and its converse, Occidentalism, in Bollywood films set during the time of the Raj. Carefully placed alongside her essay is Christian Vogt-Williams’ “Transcultural Gender Interrogations in *Bride and Prejudice*”. Rainer Emig provides a further exploration of British-Asian culture in the subversive potential of female rapper M.I.A.’s (Maya Arupragsam) lyrics, a performer of Sri

Lankan origin. Situating M.I.A's cultural and political musings on postcolonial identity in the context of global terrorism and identity alienation, Emig's essay is a fine example of the political currency of postcolonial studies. These essays highlight that popular culture can be often overlooked in academic discourse. The hidden irony here of course is that Western commercial and technological artforms such as big-budget cinema and downloadable rap music can be subverted by the colonised in the postcolonial moment, but never entirely appropriated.

The fourth group of essays, those that deal with the New World, offer interesting readings of Antipodean and American texts. The collection maintains its editorial continuity by echoing the theme of Jaczminski's opening essay on Caliban. Renate Brosch's "Vernacular Space: Narrative Space in Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*", along with Micaela Moura-Koçoğlu's essay on indigenous children's fiction in New Zealand and the Americas, examine how past visual images conflict and complement linguistic representations of identity in the present. Appropriately for a collection that deals with the question of the postcolonial homeplace, *Word & Image* finishes with two fascinating articles on cultural displacement by Nicole Schröder and Jens Martin Gurr. Gurr's essay on Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man* explores the theoretical complexity of the synchronisation of word and image in this revisionist western, and draws attention to the problematic representation of the mass-slaughter of the native Americans in cinematic versions of the West.

A minor objection is that the essays frequently suffer from too many needless sub- and number headings, breaking discursive fluency in favour of a formulaic structure. Nonetheless, *Word & Image* is an impressive and attractive collection. It should be borne in mind that what is not at stake in *Word & Image* is a thorough-going investigation into the *realpolitik* of colonialism, but rather an examination of aesthetic representation in a cross-cultural context. In this sense, the collection overall avoids the difficult politics of colonial legacies, with most essays preferring instead to concentrate on the limits of word/image representation. In this regard it is a welcome addition to the store of recent postcolonial scholarship on the ideological impulses behind words and images.

Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo and Gina Wisker (eds.). 2010. Rites of Passage in Postcolonial Women's Writing. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 307 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-2935-4.

Evren Akaltun
Stony Brook University New York

Rites of Passage in Postcolonial Women's Writing is an edited collection of essays. The editors, Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo and Gina Wisker, incorporate essays from scholars based in Europe, the Americas, and Australia. The book is composed of five parts based on a geographical division: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, and the Cross-Continental. As the introductory essay highlights, these essays either accommodate or question the traditional views of rites of passage that were introduced by ethnographer Arnold van Gennep in *The Rites of Passage* (*Les rites de passage*, 1909; translated 1960) and Victor Turner's anthropological study *The Ritual Process* (1969), which is based on van Gennep's work (ix).

Van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage*, which has inspired the essays in this volume, articulates how certain rites mark the life crises of individuals between birth and death (ix). According to the structure that van Gennep provides, rites of passage consist of three major phases: rites of separation (preliminal), transition rites (liminal), and rites of incorporation (postliminal). While the essays incorporate, challenge or seek an alternative to van Gennep's classification of ritual, they also utilise Victor Turner's adaptation *The Ritual Process* (1969), which focuses more on van Gennep's second phase, liminality. According to Turner, this phase is the threshold in which "an unstructured community emerges in which social structures can be challenged and subversive acts can take place" (x). Essays in this volume manifest different ways of challenging and subverting the established social structures to create territories that allow resistance to colonial and patriarchal subjugation.

Passage or liminality as a form of resistance unfolds into a variety of themes in postcolonial women's writing. It can be manifested as pregnancy, coming-of-age, adolescence, and even in the act of writing itself. Pregnancy is one of the main themes in the Africa section, in which the first three essays dwell on pregnancy as a metaphor and an allegory in the novels of the Zimbabwean writer Yvonne Vera. In "A State of Transition: Connotations of Pregnancy in Yvonne Vera's *Without a Name* and *Butterfly Burning*," Katrin Berndt argues that Vera represents pregnancy as a threat to "women's attempt at self-definition," subverting idealised notions of motherhood. Pregnancy is associated with liminality and the protagonists of these novels cannot step into the postliminal stage to re-adjust to the society. In her essay "Nothing Like Motherhood: Barrenness, Abortion, and Infanticide in Yvonne Vera's Fiction," Helen Cousins examines the centrality of motherhood to African women's identity and emphasises the importance of making links between community, individual, and motherhood. She reveals a gap in African feminist theory, which has not fully addressed the link between compulsory motherhood and the position of infertile women in modern African societies. Cousins underlines the importance of interrogating the use of the term "motherhood" and suggests that African feminist theorists should pursue different paths than their Western counterparts (38). In a similar fashion, in "Mourning and the Angel of History in Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins*," Alexandra W. Schultheis points to the importance of creating an alternative narrative of postcolonial modernity that necessitates alternative subjectivities and alternative modes of representation (58). According to Schultheis, Vera re-activates political discourse through the acknowledgement of past trauma by looking at Zimbabwe's recent history and examining the notion of mourning (55).

Representation in African women's writing is approached from a different perspective by Lizzy Attree, who draws our attention to the absence of certain themes, such as AIDS, in these narratives. Attree asks in "Women Writing AIDS in South Africa and Zimbabwe" how themes such as love, sex, and mothering, as well as AIDS, can be redefined and represented by women writers to question different forms of oppression suffered by African women.

In the Americas section, Kimberly M. Jew correlates feminist and postcolonial perspectives to address female resistance to colonial subjugation in her analysis of ritual in two plays by the contemporary Hawaiian playwright, Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl. While ritual signifies a return to the idealised vision of Hawaiian origins before colonialism in Kneubuhl's play *The Conversation of Ka'ahumanu*, her other play, *Emmalehua*, offers a culturally hybrid Hawaii as an amalgamation of Hawaiian and Western culture and as a means of empowering women. Polina Mackay has a less positive view of her subject matter. She explores three novels by Bharati Mukherjee, *The Tiger's Daughter*, *Wife*, and

Jasmine, and is willing to interrogate Mukherjee's work. Mackay claims that Mukherjee too easily celebrates the "new pioneer" who migrated from India to the USA and that she reproduces essentialisms by reducing complex historical forces into simple binary oppositions.

Issues of mourning and motherhood inspire Lopamudra Basu's argument in the Asia section as she explores these two themes in the short stories "Dhowli" and "The Funeral Wailer" by Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi. In both of these short stories, motherhood is recognised as a site of class, gender and class oppression, yet the author argues that it can also be a source of resistance to patriarchy and capitalist modernity. In both of these stories, women protagonists are able to transform their personal losses and reintegrate with the social world; traumatic moments become an "aesthetic and political rite of passage from abjectness to agency" (130).

The term metamodernism in Alexandra Dumitrescu's title refers to Plato's metaxy, which suggests a negotiation between opposite poles as well as repositioning beyond. Dumitrescu addresses the dual nature of metamodernism and designates it as a continuous passage between modernism and postmodernism, a tendency to achieve feminine self-realisation (151). In "Intimations of Metamodernism: Innocence and Experience in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*," she claims that Arundhati Roy achieved the unity and awareness of the self in the tense relationship between the postcolonial experience and the European views on education and coming-of-age. Sharanya Jayawickrama's essay focuses on the act of writing as both a rite of passage and as a recuperative act. Jayawickrama looks at the Sri Lankan writer Jean Arasanayagam's work and examines the ways in which the protagonist, although excluded from the traditional rituals of the patriarch, counters the exclusion through re-writing, repetition, and re-positioning. In that manner, the act of writing can be seen as an alternative ritual to the traditional patriarchal ritual.

In the Australia section, Gay Breyley points to the particular experience of Australia where colonisation and decolonisation coincide, leading to the emergence of contrapuntal histories. Breyley analyses two Indigenous women writers' representations of the rites of passage through a portrayal of "displaced, stateless teenage female workers" (188). Adolescence is undoubtedly a critical passage in one's life. Breyley, with an original slant, uses popular music that relates to the two narrators' adolescence to illustrate the dissonance in displaced subjects' lives. Rachel Slater also examines threshold experience in her essay as she analyses two Asian-Australian narratives, Eva Sallis's *The City of Sealions* and Hsu-Ming Teo's *Love and Vertigo*. Border crossing in these novels is interpreted as rites of passage, which involves journeys of mothers and daughters.

In the Cross-Continental section, drawing on Freud's theory of mourning and melancholia and Julia Kristeva's exploration of the melancholic process in relation to the rites of passage, Jessica Gildersleeve examines female consciousness in Jean Rhys's four early novels. Ophelia, as an epitome of female melancholia, is refashioned as a Modernist Ophelia, which suggests a redefinition of femininity through fire and water imagery in Rhys's novels. In her essay "Coming-of-Age, Coming to Mourning: *Purple Hibiscus*, *Lucy*, and *Nervous Conditions*", Tanya Danziell claims that mourning can also enable us to redefine the frameworks available for analysing grief in postcolonial studies, pointing to the ethical aspect of mourning. Anna Gething incorporates Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection and Mary Douglas's work on dirt, to explore the ways in which the abject is subversive, the "foreign country of femaleness," which resists incorporation into colonial

ideology (268). Gething focuses on two female coming-of-age novels, Kate Grenville's *Lilian's Story* and Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*, that depict abjection as a means of protection and as a force that dispels the patriarchal aesthetic of femininity. The last essay in the collection, by Irene Visser, also adopts a comparative approach to postcolonial fiction and analyses Ana Castillo's *So Far from God* and Patricia Grace's *Baby No-Eyes*. According to Visser, rites of passage link the protagonists of these novels to their indigenous culture.

The collection offers different approaches to rites of passage in postcolonial women's writing. Contributors to the volume elaborate on the notion of passage, which encapsulates all sorts of resistance: borders, liminality, margins, *transformation*, and finally, *transdisciplinary* approaches. By exploring the narratives that represent women's subversive acts and challenges to the established norms of society, essays in this volume enable us to experience postcolonial and feminist theories from a broader perspective. This liminal territory also provides new grounds for the postcolonial studies discipline, broadening the scope of the field by addressing the female experience and resistance to patriarchal and colonial subjugation. The blending of feminist theories with postcolonial studies is truly interdisciplinary. The collection may inspire further research into the intersections of the two fields.

Janet Floyd, Alison Easton, R.J. Ellis and Lindsey Traub (eds.). 2010. *Becoming Visible. Women's Presence in Late Nineteenth-Century America*. Rodopi: Amsterdam and New York, 370 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-2977-4.

Marta María Gutiérrez Rodríguez
University of Valladolid, Spain

The nineteenth century was a time of dramatic change for women in the United States. *Becoming Visible: Women's Presence in Late Nineteenth Century America* approaches the situation of women in terms that are different from the traditional binaries of inside/outside and private/public, thus providing a fresh overview of the experiences of women. This explains the title of the book, as the cultural visibility of different groups of women – immigrants, working-class, Native American, African American, white middle class – is examined in order to show the important alterations that women's lives underwent during the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. Becoming visible can be a good and/or a bad thing for women in the same way that they can be (in)visible in different spaces.

The essays are arranged in three different sections. Part I, entitled "The Changing Geography of Public and Private", deals with the distinction between public and private, with important women who became highly visible, and with the working conditions of women in different industries.

Anne M. Boylan's essay vindicates the visibility of women in public spaces and blames historians and literary scholars for not seeing them due to the male-public/female-private separation and the assumption that a "public woman" must be a prostitute. At the time, respectable women were considered to be invisible. She focuses her attention on three important developments for women, i.e., the reshaping of downtown areas and city landscapes because of voluntary associations and "working girls", historic preservation through monument building and historical societies, and women's involvement in

political activity, which necessitated their access to public transport. The essay by S.J. Kleinberg openly challenges the public versus private spheres of life as presented in Barbara Welter's 1966 article "The Cult of True Womanhood." (Boylan makes similar points.) Not all families were wealthy, the state could be involved in private matters and many homes were more public than private. Importantly, "one woman's private or domestic space could be another's public one" (93). Kleinberg rejects any straightforward separation of public/private because it ignores the realities of most women at that time. Alison Easton further develops this rejection of the public/private separation in her article on social and charitable visiting. Easton uses Sarah Ornet Jewett's *A Country Doctor* (1884) and Annie Adams Fields' *How to Help the Poor* (1884) to show how such visiting can be considered both a private and a public activity.

Janet Zandy deals with three social revolutionaries – Mother Jones, Lucy Parsons, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn – who wanted better material conditions for working-class people and pursued "a radical change in the social order" (42). They were considered "the most dangerous women in America" (43), but to Zandy they were "three highly visible, outspoken, fearless and determined women" (61) who saw labour struggles as being inseparable from domestic struggles. Mia Bay's essay introduces us to Ida B. Wells, the first famous African-American female journalist who owned and edited a newspaper. In fact, she was known as "Ida, the Princess of the Press" (121). She was famous for her denunciations of lynching, which she transformed into a women's issue because "women could be murdered with impunity in her home state" (122). Thus, she – and other black women – began to speak out on behalf of their race and gender.

Finally, the essay by Margaret Walsh presents the clothing industry as a site of conflict for women due to the transformation of homes into workplaces, as many women took in sewing as a supplement to family earnings. She considers the "sweatshop debate" on overcrowded and unsanitary working conditions in factories. Once again, the public versus private separation is challenged.

Part II, under the title "Stepping Out: Bodies, Spaces and the Cultural Representation of Visibility", deals entirely with literary representations of visibility. Lindsey Traub presents Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868) and *Work: A Story of Experience* (1873) to show her conception of visibility and the importance it has in the transition from childhood to adulthood. According to her, women should control their (in)visibility in order to avoid vulnerability. R.J. Ellis uses *Four Girls in a Cottage City* (1895) by Emma Dunham Kelley-Hawkins to show the stepping out of four young women in the late nineteenth century and their awareness of external appearance. This novel follows the Sunday school novel genre which focuses on the female protagonists' internal dilemmas over their perceptions of Christian morality, respectability, and their leisure activities. Janet Floyd addresses three fictional representations of the female singer, a figure that attracted attention during the late nineteenth century because of the striking visibility of the singer's body and the audibility of her voice. Besides, "it raised questions about the spaces, private or public, in which women might appropriately display powers understood as inherent or God-given" (201). Peter Rawlings uses *The Bostonians* and its main character Verena Tarrant to compare James' and Locke's concepts of visibility, with an emphasis on the collusion between seeing and being seen. For Rawlings, "it is counterintuitive to regard 'becoming visible' in the late nineteenth century as anything other than liberating for women" (219-220). Karen L. Kilcup examines Narcissa Owen's literary production because the author was of Cherokee descent, but also had the experiences of an American woman living in the South. Kilcup

uses Owen to show how public and private spaces are always interconnected. Owen repudiated the image of women as victims and she opened “a space for multiracial women in American history, literature and art” (242). Finally, Shirley Foster uses the figure of the woman traveller to present the importance of the female body, the “‘material feminine’ corporeal agency” (263). She looks at the specific case of women’s clothes, which were considered a major obstacle to successful travel. Foster discusses Nelly Bly’s enterprise of travelling around the world in less than 80 days.

Part III, on “Becoming Modern”, includes the last two articles of the collection and it addresses questions of modernity. Timothy A. Hickman looks at the increasing visibility of women as an indicator of the passage of time and the breaking away from the past. He considers the sentimental writings of Frances E. Willard to examine technological metaphors for women’s expanding opportunities in the modern era. Finally, Susan K. Harris uses the Philippine-American War to show that there were women involved in the anti-imperialist discourse who voiced opposition against the mistreatment of the colonised people and who denounced American hypocrisy in its use of religious arguments to support the invasion of other places.

This extraordinary collection of essays examines new situations for women in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America from social, historical, economic and literary points of view. This interdisciplinary approach results in a full and very well edited collection on the topic of women’s visibility during a time of great social change.

Elizabeth McMahon and Brigitta Olubas, (eds.). 2010. *Remembering Patrick White: Contemporary Critical Essays*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 218 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-2849-4

Pamela Osborn
Kingston University, U.K.

A reassessment of the importance of the Nobel Prize winning Australian novelist and playwright Patrick White’s contribution to literature is long overdue. This collection of essays will be welcomed by those who believe that White’s demanding and avant-garde work is more relevant in the twenty-first century than it has ever been. *Remembering Patrick White* undertakes to examine the full range of the author’s work under four headings: “Patrick White’s Public Selves,” “Form and Expression,” “White’s Metaphysics” and “Performance.” The introduction proudly declares that the aim of this collection is to provide “a timely acknowledgement of this prickly and vulnerable legacy precisely in the ways it takes up new and changing critical perspectives, inviting readers to re-engage with the dynamism and substance of White’s writing.” (xvii)

The first section reappraises the connection between White’s writings and his public personae, and all three essays reassess White’s reputation as an outsider. Bernadette Brennan’s analysis of White’s 1961 novel, *Riders in the Chariot*, neatly follows Brigid Rooney’s essay on White as a “public recluse” (3) Brennan suggests that, rather than valorising “outcast” (21) characters simply for their status as outcasts, a criticism that was levelled at the author throughout his career, White endorses attempts to engage with society and reality. Brennan looks at White’s explorations of multiculturalism as part of a continuing “global conversation” (32). This leads in well to the next essay, where Rodney Wetherall contributes a memory-led piece about the Patrick White Award, which was intended by White to advance local literature, by

encouraging authors who “have not received due recognition for their contribution to Australian Literature” (36).

In the wide-ranging “Form and Expression” section, Jennifer Rutherford tackles the twenty-first century fashion amongst academics to dismiss and denigrate White. She judiciously proposes that he was far-seeing in connecting white Australian racism with genocide. Her reading of *The Tree of Man* opposes that of Simon During, a critic whose famous dismissal of White is challenged by the contributors to this collection. She concludes that *The Tree of Man*’s melancholy depiction of the lives of Australian settlers is important because it is neither romantic nor heroic. Elizabeth McMahon’s fascinating reappraisal of White’s *The Twyborn Affair* as his very last work of fiction questions whether we are better equipped to view its “queerness” (77) thirty years on and provides a fitting and thought-provoking end to the section.

White’s status as a metaphysical author is explored in the third section. Bill Ashcroft skilfully examines White’s “sublime horizon of Australian distance” (107) and his location of the sacred in the everyday. Lyn McCredden places *Voss* within the modernist, even Cubist tradition, with the Christ figure Voss at its centre. The section is neatly rounded off by Veronica Brady’s clever essay. Brady considers White’s preoccupation with the true world and how this conflicts with his prominence as a modernist writer. She traces White’s movement from aesthetic writing to metaphysical and even theological work, and celebrates White’s belief in transcendence and devotion to that which is beyond the surface.

The last trilogy of essays concerns performance in White’s plays and novels. John McCallum considers White’s late, supposedly crazy plays in the context of his difficult relationship with theatre. Like many of the contributors before him, White acknowledges that White was far ahead of his time as a dramatist and grants him the title of Australia’s first successful modern playwright. McCallum concludes that modern literature and drama have caught up with White at last. In her piece on White’s early drama, Brigitta Olubas concurs with theatre historians that the controversy over the original staging of *The Ham Funeral* was a defining moment in the development of a modern, internationally inflected theatre in Australia. She celebrates White’s ongoing success as a playwright through a fascinating analysis of *The Ham Funeral* and the various performances of the play. The final essay of the collection by Gregory Graham-Smith deftly examines the perceived connection between androgyny, homosexuality, self-dividedness and performance through the intriguing Brown twins in the novel *The Solid Mandala*.

The main body of essays is followed by an excellent and comprehensive bibliography, which serves as a reminder of White’s superior body of work and of the criticism inspired by it. This volume is itself an essential contribution to the critical work on White. The aim of the collection is to “bring White up to date for new generations of readers and scholars,” (ix) and the editors and contributors have succeeded in generating new and innovative approaches to his work. The notion that White is important as a writer of modernity (in every sense of the word) is present in almost every essay. Although there is some unnecessary literary jargon, analyses of White’s novels and plays are informed and thoughtful. There could have been more analysis of White’s considerable influence on modern writing, but this collection is very successful in showing that White was far ahead of his time. The twentieth century was unprepared for White, a visionary who is reminiscent of William Blake. *Remembering Patrick White* is a fitting testament to the work and life of a writer who should now be fully appreciated.

Patricia Coughlan and Tina O'Toole, (eds.). 2008. *Irish Literature: Feminist Perspectives, IASIL Studies in Irish Writing*. Dublin: Carysfort Press, 298 pp. ISBN: 978-1-904505-35-8.

Ligia Doina Constantinescu
University of Iași, Romania

This collection originates from the 2004 IASIL Conference at New University of Ireland, Galway, and a set of three feminist panels that dwelt on “Irish Writing and Contemporary Feminist Scholarship.” Recent acquisitions in feminist thinking becomes a topical prerequisite not only for stimulating ideological diversity and updating Irish literary scholarship, but especially for redressing omissions, in different forms, of women writers, without minimising the urgency of the canon reshuffling. The contributors to this collection share a common pursuit – scholarly emancipation by renegotiating the relations between feminism and nationalism – and they undertake this by either addressing non-canonical voices, or by capitalising on critical approaches such as psychoanalysis or post-structuralism. The essays are sequenced chronologically, ranging from eighteenth and nineteenth century topics to the recent state of play in the Irish Studies field. The cover design features Gwen O'Dowd's “Uaimh,” meaning cave, in the symbolic Celtic colour, green.

In “Foreign Tyrants and Domestic Tyrants: The Public, the Private and 18th Century Irish Women's Writing”, Cliona O' Gallchoir first mounts a critique of the widespread binary pattern – public-private, masculine-feminine – as particularised with a nationalist cast or bias in the Irish cultural space. O' Gallchoir opts instead for Anne Mellor's paradigm (2002) that prioritises “complex intersection of class, religions, racial and gender differences”, especially relevant in this (late eighteenth century) period (7). Sarah Butler's *Irish Tale* (1716) is discussed in a way that foregrounds the interconnectedness – if not even the indivisibility – between the private and the public. Female subjectivity can become instrumental in shaping a national identity – within both public and private dimensions – according to this interpretation of the novel as a “call not only for patriotic resistance but also for internal reformation of Irish society” (34).

Kathryn Conrad focuses on the centrality of gender and sexuality to national identity and nationalist discourse in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in “Keening the Nation: *The Bean Chainte*, the *Sean Bhean Bhocht*, and Women's Lament in Irish Nationalist Narrative”. The literary correlatives to traditional laments are nineteenth century political ballads, satiric poetry and Literary Revivalists' writings, as well as some twentieth century nationalist literary and theatrical representations. Conrad insightfully analyses examples that enable her to reframe an old issue: the possibly distorted appropriation of the female cultural production by some Revivalists. The effectiveness of Conrad's argumentative strategy consists in her reading the nationalist trope (Ireland as a woman) against the grain of traditional feminists.

Heidi Hansson opts for the third wave feminist notions of “situatedness” and “locationality” in “Selina Bunbury, the Pope and the Question of Location”. Such a strategic option manages to do justice to the unfairly neglected voice of one of Ireland's first truly professional women writers, Selina Bunbury (1802-1882). Bunbury remains outstandingly distinctive not only because of her prolific output, but also because of her ideological ambiguity about women's issues and her double voiced discourse. Ideological contradictions and interrogations (if not subversions), as professionally experienced by

this late nineteenth century Irish writer with her feminist stances, are brilliantly traced out in her extensive writing, in her travel texts, as well as in her public interventions.

In “Nomadic Subjects in Katherine Cecil Thurston’s *Max*,” Tina O’Toole examines Thurston’s experimentally modernist fiction writing as contextualised within New Woman Frameworks. ‘Max-/ine’ is a female to male transvestite, who flees her country and her marriage as well as her condition in a strictly gender-segregated upper class world and meets the Irish Blake. The novel shows how womanhood is constructed/delimited socially: assumptions about one’s true self can become insecure, if not doubtful, by gender performativity (and clothing). Max repudiates femininity, not only out of alienation (from his female body), but especially out of an awareness of the powerlessness of women. O’Toole’s undertaking is suggestive of the degree to which the hybridity of Irish writing could “more fully become discernible by similar enterprises ‘of complicating and enriching’ conventional narratives of literary history”, as well as gender-national identities (94).

In “Almost Forgotten Names: Irish Women Poets of 1930s, 1940s and 1950”, Kathy D’Arcy discusses four poets who published between 1929-1955: Mary Devenport O’Neill, Blanaid Salkeld, Sheila Wingfield and Rhoda Coghill, all of them belatedly reconsidered in an attempt at reshuffling/renewing Irish literary scholarship. With perceptive close reading along thematic, formalist and contextual lines, D’Arcy’s demonstration singles out their common concern with the practice of feminism. All of the poets are cogently argued to share the poetic gift of negotiating “precarious positions between and outside of dominant discourses” (119), thus justifying their recovery.

One of the few canonical Irish female contemporary writers is discussed by Briona Nic Dhiarmada in her essay “The Love Poetry of Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill”. She astutely draws on Irigaray’s theories as well as on the Irish language tradition of love poetry, so as to pursue the poet’s sensuous, self-conscious, and playful strategies (inversion, transposition/ intertextuality), enacted in terms of the dynamics between oral and written literary species. The original poetic work in Irish is viewed as facilitating a frank examination of female sexuality in a way that allows women to be speaking subjects in the poems. Yet the new poems of her translators (into English) help to renew the general discourse of Irish poetry by incessantly investing the old with a new sensibility - just as Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill has similarly and fruitfully juxtaposed native and foreign elements. Briona Nic Dhiarmada ranks Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill with other twentieth century women poets of international fame.

“‘I am the Place in Which Things Happen’: Invisible Immigrant Women Poets of Ireland” is topical in several ways, one being the enquiry about Irishness. Borbala Farago contends that, although women emigrant poets have been considerably anthologised, the immigrant ones (to Ireland) have remained relatively invisible as a group. This prompts Farago to work out a conceptual framework on migration, identity and minority (Deleuze, Kristeva, Hugo Hamilton), within which she expertly discusses - with close reading arguments – existential, psychological and aesthetic implications of poetic and dramatic texts by writers from many different countries. Such fascinatingly new insights, striking perspectives and excellent close reading will certainly stimulate further research.

Giovana Tallone (“Past, Present and Future. Patterns of Otherness in Eilís Ni Dhuibhne’s Fiction”) outlines the origins of the bilingual writer’s work and the formal features of her fiction. Recurrent patterns and temporal shifts are effectively traced out and correlated to a vitally ethic ideology (and vision) about the Ireland from the late 1980s onwards. Topoi of palimpsest and archaeological layering are subtly unravelled in

Eilis Ni Dhuibhne's work, and shown as instrumental in exploring inner otherness or dividedness, in an unassuming, apparently popular style. Various narrative and stylistic choices in the writer's handling of space and time are singled out as underlying her thematic concern with otherness and difference – through the juxtaposition of other spaces and other times.

In "Reclaiming Feminine Identities: Anne Enright's *The Wig My Father Wore*", Elke D'hoker dwells on the magic-realist mode of the 1995 novel through the conceit of the angel boyfriend, enacted so as to combine a love story and an anti-essentialist critique. This novel is discussed as subtly parodying nationalist myths as embedded in patriarchal ideologies (stereotypical representations) while celebrating differences (of contemporary feminisms). A narrative mode of comic, farcical fragmentation is shown to be effectively wielded so as to bring a new lease of life to such topics as motherhood, femininity, romantic love and national identity as authenticated by women's everyday realities in the pre-Celtic Tiger period. As an oppositional echo to the sash of the Protestant marching song epitomising an essentially authentic identity warranting violence, the wig is synecdochic of a media-engineered Irish reality (specifically television).

Eliza Lynch (1835-1886), an Irish immigrant woman on the make, is explored in Anne Enright's "*The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch*" as an equivocal figure, whose picaresque and picturesque life got enmeshed in a Paraguay dominated, in 1869, by the dictator Francisco Solano Lopez (1826-1870). Susan Cahill motivates why the 2002 novel becomes a powerful critique of historiography in relation to female subjectivity and agency, a relation disturbingly complicated by Eliza's moral ambiguity and iconic construction. Representations of the pregnant iconic female body are poignantly interrogated in terms of the physical realities of pregnancy, in joint articulation with the sex and food-appetite imagery, with its deliberately comic-grotesque effects; the part of those motifs is motivated by Enright's "larger critique of permitted femininities as well as their implications for the fate of Mother Ireland figurations in the Irish cultural imaginary of Postmodernity" (13) ("A Greedy Girl and a National Thing: Gender and History in Anne Enright's *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch*").

In "Becoming Mother Machine: The Event of *Field Day Vol IV and V*", Claire Bracken aims at accounting for the effects and significance of feminist undertakings of archiving, anthologising and canon-critiquing types. She opts for Irigaray's psychoanalysis and poststructuralist feminist notions that enable her to rethink "new kinds of inter-relations achievable between women practitioners" (13). Emphasis is placed on the post-modernist modes of communication that are impacting women's contexts, thereby managing to counter the still prevailing Oedipal model, creating a between-women, mother-daughter metaphorical paradigm (instead of the between-men, father-son paradigm). Her essay can be used to understand projects such as the online *Munster Women Writers Dictionary* (ed. Tina O'Toole), or *The Women in Modern Irish Culture Project* (Gerardine Meaney and Maria Luddy)².

Moynagh Sullivan contributes the final essay entitled "Raising the Veil: Mystery, Myth and Melancholia in Irish Studies." When the veil of mystery is raised, it reveals a body of loss that includes women's writing and feminist and queer scholarship; it is viewed as a "functional consequent of the Irish heterosexual masculine culture's self-

² See <http://www.munsterwomen.ie/> Munster Women Writers; <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/irishwomenwriters/> Women in Modern Irish Culture.

representations in its building of a national cultural body” (249). In *Irish Literary Studies*, the “maternal space of transgression” highlights “the shadows of a past that fails to illuminate women inside Irish cultural history” (273). As a conceptual counterpart to Claire Bracken’s argument, Sullivan’s cogent and tenable argument comes as a culmination to all the essays of astute and perceptive critical discourse in this volume.

One central concern in all the studies collected here refers to the requirement of negotiating the potential contest between feminist and nationalist discourses/narratives in an emancipatory way. This book is highly commendable for raising the stakes of contemporary scholarship debating on gender, Irish culture and ideology. As a woman academic having explored the field of Irish Studies for a number of years in the Romanian cultural space, I enthusiastically respond to the brilliant, ennobling voices of these feminist scholars; I cannot help joining the symphony of collaborative enterprises.

Kirsten Stirling. 2008. *Bella Caledonia: Woman, Nation, Text*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 136 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-2510-3.

Jacqueline Ryder
University of Strathclyde, UK

Kirsten Stirling’s assertion that “the gender bias of the Scottish Literary Renaissance continues to cast a shadow over Scottish writing today” (114) is difficult to dispute, and is given credence by the demand for texts which focus exclusively on women writers. Stirling also criticises “the critical reception of the cultural phenomenon that is the recent wave of Scottish writing [which] tends to involve reading every new narrative of fractured identity [...] as an allegory for the political situation of Scotland” (112). For scholars in the field of Scottish literary studies, these arguments are not new and echo the perennial debates which voice anxiety over the limitations placed on Scottish literature. Yet *Bella Caledonia* negotiates a new space in which to engage with these concerns, and employs the “woman-as-nation” trope to consider its role in shaping these paradigms. Stirling looks at a variety of writers to demonstrate how the woman-as-nation figure has been adopted and the extent to which this has not only shaped representations of women in literature, but also how the nation has been interpreted via this feminised lens. Stirling traces its development in the writing of Hugh MacDiarmid during the Scottish Literary Renaissance, and goes on to evaluate works by Willa Muir, Naomi Mitchison, and later Alasdair Gray, Liz Lochhead, A.L. Kennedy and Janice Galloway, as examples of how the figure continues to permeate not only contemporary writers’ works but, more problematically, the critical reception of Scottish women and the nation. The figure is considered from its development as a male construction in the Scottish literary renaissance through to its manifestations as “victim” and “monstrous muse”.

Firstly, *Bella Caledonia* contextualises the trope and its manifestation in visual characters such as Marianne and Britannia and the way in which these figures depict women who are strong warriors and simultaneously the chaste mothers of the nation’s sons. The woman-as-nation trope is therefore a paradoxical figure that functions as defender of the nation’s boundaries, while equally being feminised and, by extension, turned into a victim who needs to be protected by the male citizens. Stirling then considers that this is further complicated in a Scottish context, where its political autonomy is more difficult to define. Scotland’s political status within the Union meant

that the visual figure did not fully emerge and instead developed more fully as a literary construct, particularly during the Scottish literary renaissance.

“The Female Nation as Victim” chapter establishes that “the construction of woman as victim is one of the most problematic aspects of the woman-as-nation allegory, and yet one of the most fundamental. The idea that women are always victims or potential victims underwrites almost every representation of nation as woman” (67). As such, Stirling posits that readings of Scotland-as-victim are symptomatic of the feminised symbol of the nation, and have come to influence critical interpretations which validate Scotland’s lack of agency. Concepts of rape and colonisation have led to both feminist and postcolonial readings of Scotland and although these theoretical perspectives which “break down categorisations” are laudable, Stirling cautions that “it risks coming full circle and returning to the allegory of woman as nation” (85) by locating it within a discourse of passivity. Conversely, such theoretical frameworks have the potential to impose parameters rather than promote a wider scope for debate.

Bella Caledonia may focus on writers who are well-documented within the field, but the textual analysis of the trope opens up new ways to discuss these writers - in a comparative manner. At times a more developed analysis would have been welcome, particularly in the final chapter, “Women Writing Nation”. Understandably limitations apply, but Stirling’s claim that Ellen Galford’s *Queendom Come* (1990) “contains probably the funniest female incarnation of Scotland in the twentieth century, or indeed at all” (115) would suggest that it merited more than the few pages of analysis provided. It is reasonable that the prevalence of the trope would no doubt enable numerous writers to be included in this framework, and a minor criticism of *Bella Caledonia* is that it does not allow space to consider a few more authors. It is positive that Stirling does not valorise women writers over their male counterparts and adopts a mediated approach to how both genders have been influenced by the woman-as-nation figure. Yet, while Alasdair Gray’s works in particular are given substantial attention, others like Muir and Mitchison could have benefited from more prolonged consideration, particularly since their works have been overlooked in comparison to their male contemporaries.

Stirling ends by considering the way in which both Kennedy and Galloway push beyond the limitations of “Scotland and the Scottish women” in their work and argues “perhaps, they are able to break away from the idea that being a Scottish writer requires a particular subject-matter or style” (126). Of course, while writers may resist limitations placed on them, *Bella Caledonia* ultimately demonstrates that attempts to distance or deny the importance of the nation, or gender in the case of female authors, is not always successful. Both Kennedy and Galloway are cited as contesting the importance of these issues in their works. What is evident, then, is that the onus lies within the field of literary criticism which imposes these restrictions on writers by continually assessing texts from a gendered, nationalist perspective. While these arguments will undoubtedly continue to dominate the landscape of Scottish literary studies, *Bella Caledonia* is exemplary in demonstrating that it is not necessary to dismiss debates about Scottish nationalism or fractured identity. They can be considered beyond reductive generalisations of homogenous nation (the analysis of Gray is commendable in this respect). Stirling instead shows these issues can be opened up and, more importantly, supported by sustained textual analysis.

Stirling’s concise, focused remit and accessible book will engage a wide range of scholars, and is a welcome contribution that offers a new avenue in which to interpret twentieth-century Scottish literature.