

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

Lawrence Phillips, ed. *The Swarming Streets. Twentieth-Century Literary Representations of London*. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2004. 227 pp.

Regina Rudaityte (Vilnius, Lithuania)

---

Cities, like people, are living-beings, changing shape, flickering and bustling, deteriorating and coming to life again; they arouse enormous interest and make a fascinating object for dissection and exploration. Since the emergence of Modernism, literature has always been concerned with the city as its setting and metaphorical space. According to Malcolm Bradbury, who notably wrote interesting observations about cities of Modernism in general and about London in particular, the London cityscape becomes “important literary subject-matter and the source of new forms”.

London and its changing identity throughout the twentieth century is also the focus of the collection of essays under review *The Swarming Streets. Twentieth-Century Literary Representations of London* which alongside the illuminating book *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) by Deborah Parsons is another seminal study of the city to fill the void in “the literary biography” of London. The essays of the collection in different ways pursue the theme of the urban experience providing the reader with many faces of London as well as different visions of the cosmopolis ranging from modernist to postmodernist. With each consecutive essay on the writings of Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Julian Barnes, Graham Swift, Iain Sinclair, Andrea Levy among others, the psychogeographical and spiritual map of London becomes gradually problematized. The traditional modernist wonder at the city, London generally perceived as a vibrant and enjoyable cosmopolitan city, Woolf’s fascination with London, “a jewel of jewels”, give way to the representations of a grieving city as a metaphor for modern life, to the new space of war-time London defined by sound, the city as an imaginative construct, the mythic cosmopolis, and, finally, to the multicultural postcolonial London in the globalized culture. All the essays address the ways in which history, war, class, social, moral and racial issues, identity shaping and existential paradoxes are negotiated through representations of London.

In the essay “A Risky Business”, Nadine Attewell

outlines the discourse of desire concentrating on *flanterie* and “women’s conflicted experience of the London street in the early twentieth century”(p.18) in the fiction of Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson. It is obvious that the tension between streetwalking, presupposing the pursuit of freedom on the one hand, and the representation of the London street as an arena of potential risk and sexual danger for women on the other hand, puts women in marginalized positions in the city.

While in *Mrs Dalloway* streetwalking is a mind-altering and ecstatic activity for V.Woolf’s heroine, as Vicki Tromanhauser’s essay “Virginia Woolf’s London and the Archeology of Character” demonstrates, and London is represented through the projection of the human psyche onto it – linking space and consciousness was essential for Woolf’s concept of character.

In her excellent essay “A Filmless London”, Francesca Frigerio explores the influence of the cinema on urban culture in early twentieth century, its transformative power of the London space, tracing the obvious connection between *flanterie* and the film technique in Dorothy Richardson’s writings. The cinema, as the essay argues, remodelled the city’s architecture and represented a new public space where women could enjoy their *flanterie* without becoming the object of the gaze; moreover, the cinema obviously reshaped the modern novel and is the main model for Richardson’s prose.

Keith Wilson (in “Julian Barnes and the Marginalisation of Metropolitanism”) focuses on Julian Barnes’s cultural cosmopolitanism, the writer’s attempts to imagine a vision of London from a foreign perspective and identify paradoxes of metropolitan culture in *Metroland* and *Letters from London*.

Samantha Skinner’s short but very interesting essay deals with postmodern representations of London in Iain Sinclair’s fiction in which London’s history is traced through scraps serving as clues to his literary technique. The scholar puts forward an interesting argument that the modernist figure of *flaneur* has been transformed into that of the rag-picker to which the writer is compared. His literary method, the essay argues, is very similar to rag-

picking – “reassembling a disturbed and demented London from scraps, or glimpses.” (p.171)

The two final essays (“Images of London in African Literature” by Kwadwo Osei-Nyame, Jnr, and “Andrea Levy’s London Novels” by Susan Alice Fischer) address the landscape of multicultural London from a postcolonial perspective, which unfolds as ambivalent space – a place of refuge for African and Jamaican migrants as well as a signifier for their marginalisation, and a city of ethnic tension, a threatening, unsafe place.

All the essays of the collection (including those I failed to mention in this short review due to the limitations of space) present illuminating and valuable

pieces of literary scholarship. Although the essays are so diverse in terms of critical approaches and texts chosen for the analysis, it is the literary representation of London that serves as a unifying link for the whole collection. Despite the editor Lawrence Phillips’s modest assurance that “this collection is not an attempt to produce a literary biography of the twentieth-century city” (p.5), however, he did assemble a stimulating book in which London takes on different guises, functioning not only as background space but at times as a personified protagonist in its own right, and in which, with each essay telling its own remarkable tale of the city, the history of the twentieth-century London so vividly unfolds.

---

**Diane Davies, *Varieties of Modern English*.**

London: Longman, 2005. 172 pp.

*Loredana Frăţilă (Timișoara, Romania)*

---

Diane Davies’ *Varieties of Modern English* is “designed to function as a general textbook” (p. ix) that addresses university or college students without prior knowledge of linguistics or of the methods of linguistic analysis. The book is structured around ten chapters, each including a general discussion of the issue approached, a summary, an activities section, and suggestions for further reading. Although all the chapters contribute to draw the full picture of the varieties of present-day English, they may also be read individually, and not necessarily in the order proposed by the author.

The writer tackles the issue of linguistic variety from various perspectives. At first, she clarifies the terms idiolects, dialects and accents. Thus, idiolects are the embodiment of variation at the individual’s level, limited by grammar and pronunciation rules, on the one hand, and by the extra-linguistic rules of the community of which the individual is a member, on the other. Idiolects, the author further explains, may be the exemplification of particular dialects (either Standard English or one of the traditional dialects that continue to be used under more and more unfavourable conditions in the rural areas), and accents.

Some fundamental analytical tools needed for the description of language variation are pre-sented, starting with the introduction of notions pertaining to phonetics and phonology (phonemes, minimal pairs, allophones, syllable structure, and the like), and continuing with the illustration of various processes of word formation and vocabulary enrichment (affixation, compounding, borrowing, clipping, the use of acronyms, etc.), and with some basic notions of syntax and text linguistics.

Special attention is devoted to English in a historical context: the evolution of the language is traced from the introduction of printing in the Early Modern period to the stage when it became a lingua franca (in the twentieth century), enjoying supremacy in the movie and music industry, in tourism, business and education at all levels. The author deals with the problems of the borrowings from English into other languages and of the attitudes towards English, from careless acceptance to stubborn and unreasonable rejection.

English is also approached from a global perspective, following Braj B. Kachru’s (1989) description of its worldwide spread in terms of three concentric circles: the inner circle, circumscribing the territories where English is spoken as the first language; the outer circle, containing “the territories in Africa and Asia to which English was first transported in colonial contexts and where it has since existed alongside very different local languages” (46); and the expanding circle, including the countries where English is spoken and taught more widely than other foreign languages. Davies chooses one example for each of the three circles – American English for the inner circle, South Asian English for the outer circle, and English used in Japan for the expanding circle – which she discusses in greater detail.

Unlike the earlier chapters, which approach the varieties of language from a geographical and historical perspective, chapters five and six demonstrate how these varieties may be viewed from a sociological angle. The former explores the relationship between English and ethnicity and provides details about pidgins and creoles in general,

and about the features of two ethnic varieties of English in particular (African American Vernacular and Chicano English). The latter analyses the influence of the users' sex on language varieties. Besides the rather traditional views regarding the source of the differences between the ways in which the two sexes use language (power relationships, with men having been perceived as more powerful than women, and the two sexes' purpose in conversation, with men being oriented towards getting messages across and women aiming at building same-sex solidarity), Davies supports the "performativity" theory based on the assumption that "words are used inventively and creatively to represent kinds of femininity and masculinity within gendered social networks" (84). She illustrates this theory with the peculiarities of gay, lesbian, and transgendered discourse.

The varieties that take into account the channels through which the linguistic message is transmitted are also discussed. Spoken language (either spontaneous or rehearsed) differs from written language; however, speech and writing "are interrelated in often complex ways" (106). To prove this, Davies offers examples of e-mails, mobile phone messages, chat rooms, and message boards linguistic exchanges that exhibit mixed spoken and written discourse features.

Davies is aware that context greatly influences the choice of language. To prove this, she summarizes, on the one hand, Dell Hymes' (1972) speaking model (that may, in fact, apply to any communicative situation), highlighting the factors that shape our linguistic behaviour in a given situation – the setting, the participants, the ends, the act, the key, the instrumentalities, the norms and the genre. On the other hand, she mentions M. A. K. Halliday's (1973) theory of register, which he splits into three main components – field, tenor and mode of discourse – demonstrating how a register analysis should be carried on.

The author further raises two questions: what power in language means and whether there are powerful language varieties. The former is answered rather indirectly in her statement about what power in language is not: it is neither "the same as aggressive talk" (122) nor "the same as the speech of powerful people" (123). In fact, "any speaker can be a powerful speaker in particular contexts and power is something that speakers negotiate within actual interactions" (123). The answer to the latter question is more straightforward: there are language varieties such as the politicians' speeches, news-paper articles, televised interviews and the

conversations specific to call centers that may be considered intrinsically powerful in that they may manipulate the speakers'/readers'/viewers' feelings, reactions or opinions.

The last and shortest chapter of the book could also have followed chapter four, dealing as it does with the varieties of English in the inner, the outer, and the expanding circle territories. The discussion that here centres on the future evolution of English as an international language, ends with the conclusion that, as such, English is under no threat (although changes may occur, especially in its spoken variant, and in the way it is taught in various communities).

Davies' book is reader-friendly and maintains the information provided at a low to medium level of complexity. Traditional theories of the varieties of language combine with more recent approaches to their less talked about aspects (such as, the language used in online communication and the way in which language embodies sexual identities other than the conventional masculine and feminine ones). The readers are thus offered a useful multi-faceted perspective on linguistic variety, both theoretical and applied. However, the discussion could have been more ample sometimes (e.g. a whole chapter might have been dedicated to the social varieties of English, of which slang would have deserved a detailed description; more varied examples would have helped the reader to better understand some of the issues presented: e.g. American English is discussed to illustrate the inner circle variety, but no mention is made of how this differs from another inner circle variety, such as Australian English).

*Varieties of Modern English* was designed for undergraduate students. This explains why the author pursues the ideal of clarity so forcefully. This applies to the style of writing (specific terminology is never left unexplained), and to the broader organization of the material presented.

The "Activities" sections contain exercises that, generally, reinforce the main ideas presented in the chapters. They encourage the readers to use the information they have received in applied tasks, to activate their general knowledge, their psychological, social and cultural experiences in order to express their own opinions concerning various matters presented in the book, to conduct field research, or to engage in project work. The exercises Davies suggests are captivating and motivating; they allow the students the freedom to contribute their own input, since the majority of the tasks set are rather general and not closely guided. However, some of them may prove difficult to do – access to the source of the

investigations may be uneasy if not, for some, impossible to gain (a European student, for example, may not have the chance to be exposed to genuine Chicano or Australian English), while the solving of certain exercises may presuppose skills that undergraduate students might not possess (such as questionnaire design or interview strategies).

The “Summary” section at the end of each chapter is useful for at least two reasons. On the one hand, it reinforces what has been stated in the chapter, on the other, it may actually be the starting point of one’s reading, especially if one

chooses not to read the book in the numerical order of its chapters.

Finally, the “Further reading” sections do not take the form of a mere bibliographical list, but are a combination of titles and short summaries, which is, certainly, to the benefit of the readers.

*Varieties of Modern English* does not exhaust the issue of linguistic varieties, it does not even set out to do so. However, it remains an invaluable introduction to the matter, offering a solid tool for further investigations to students not only of English, but of general linguistics as well.

---

**Patricia Ashby. *Speech Sounds*, Second Edition.**

London and New York: Routledge, 2005, 121pp.

*Biljana Cubrović (Belgrade, Serbia)*

---

*Speech Sounds* belongs to the Routledge Language Workbooks series of introductions, which are aimed at the absolute novice. The ultimate objective of the series is to successfully but painlessly launch the reader into the chosen area of language study. Dr Patricia Ashby’s book has been in existence for over a decade now, and has rightly lived to see its second edition in 2005, ten years after it first appeared in print. The second fully revised and updated edition comes with new examples and practical exercises, an appendix offering advice on career prospects in phonetics, and a comprehensive further reading section with comments on the recommended books.

For the purposes of this review, I will divide the book into three parts: the introductory section, the main body of the text, and after-text pages including advice to the reader on what to do next with the newly acquired analytical skills. The introductory section consists of a *List of Illustrations* for easy search of the figures in the text, and the author’s notes on *Using this book*, followed by *Acknowledgements*. Ten chapters then make up the main body of the workbook. These cover a wide range of topics relevant to the study of speech. The after-text pages include a newly-written section for the second edition of the book, entitled *Appendix: working with phonetics*, as well as a fully updated list of books in the *Further reading* section, *Answers to exercises* and a comprehensive *Index* of the terms fully explained throughout the book.

A clear layout of each chapter is skilfully devised and repeated in each of the ten topics dealt with in the book. Each chapter begins with a short overview of the topics to be discussed so that the reader instantly knows what is to follow. The text explanations are interwoven with highly practical

exercises (the reader is frequently asked to practice saying various speech sounds aloud or to use a mirror and see for him/herself what is going on with regard to the visible organs of speech). Where necessary, detailed in-text comments are offered by the author, which makes it easier for the user to grasp the tricky phonetic details. At the end of each chapter the reader will find a summary, occasionally accompanied by *Further Exercises*. These additional exercises are devised in such a way so as to further solidify the phonetic concepts explained in the current chapter. The necessary technical terms are given in bold print in the margins upon their first mention in the text to facilitate handy cross-referencing.

The first chapter, titled *Spoken and written language*, is concerned with the difference between the two media through which language is realized. The reader is gradually led through the basic phonetic concepts such as ‘speech sound’, ‘vowel’, and ‘consonant’. Other linguistic terms such as ‘homophone’ and ‘homograph’ are also used to illustrate spelling-to-sound relationships characteristic of English words. Some differences between the spoken forms of rhotic and non-rhotic accents of English are explored and the reader is warned not to be misled by the spelling of the elusive letter *r*. The desirable outcome of the first chapter is the triggering of the inherent knowledge all of us possess about the phonetic values of various speech sound types and their combinations as realized in real languages.

The second chapter of the book is an excellent example of Dr Ashby’s ability to prove that every layman is also a phonetician and that all of us have latent knowledge of this area of language study. In



this part of the book, the author ingeniously leads the reader through some of the very simple facts about the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (hereafter, IPA), largely those based on the Roman alphabet. The chapter *Phonetic transcription, consonant and vowel sounds* also deals with some of the surprises of IPA representations, namely the velar nasal and the yod, mostly seen from the perspective of a native English speaker. The language data from varieties other than Southern British English (SBE) and various European and non-European languages is employed to show how IPA treats a variety of spelling representations and phonotactic rules. The exercises in this chapter help the reader start gaining confidence when transcribing words and utterances from a number of languages, as well as reading from phonetic transcription.

The next chapter, entitled *Consonants: the role of the larynx*, introduces the user to one of the most important phonetic concepts relevant for both consonants and vowels – voice. All of the different states of the vocal folds are fully described in this section. Special attention has been given to the somewhat unclear orthographic representations of English voiced and voiceless alveolar fricatives [s] and [z], as well as to the dialectal differences in the realization of wh-sound.

*More about vowels* is the title of the fourth chapter of the book, which handles the classification and description of vowel sounds. Special emphasis is placed on the rather complex vocalic system of SBE. Deviations from this system are clearly outlined: SBE vs. vowel variation in other varieties of English within the British Isles, and SBE vs. those features characteristic solely of rhotic accents (*r-colouring*, for instance). Most up-to-date changes affecting SBE vowels are also taken into account. As language change is rather slow, usually passing unnoticed by both native and non-native speakers of English, the author's account of some of the latest phonetic changes in contemporary English are much appreciated both by the teacher and the student.

Consonants are once more in the spotlight. In chapter 5, entitled *The organs of speech and place of articulation*, the author gradually introduces the reader to the second important phonetic concept – place of articulation. The text is interwoven with different angles of the sagittal cross-sections, which helps the reader understand the inherent relationships between active and passive articulators, and start to be aware of double articulations. This chapter concludes with an excellent summary of the principal places of

articulation in common to a large number of languages, all with real language examples.

The manner of articulation and airstream mechanisms are the focus of Chapter 6. The former is the third phonetic concept needed to complete the full description of consonant-labelling systems. Parametric diagrams are introduced in this section with numerous practical exercises that should enable the reader to start understanding and using these in describing the positions of the velum. The author's approach to the topic of airstream mechanisms in relation to suction consonants and pressure consonants is highly laudable as these are not normally used in English and other Indo-European languages and are therefore very difficult to understand, perceive and produce. Dr Ashby's everyday examples of their usage in a language such as English are colourful and enjoyable, and the method used to explain them highly innovative.

The author goes on to complete the story of the manner of articulation in Chapter 7, entitled *Consonant description and voice-place-manner labels* (usually abbreviated to VPM labels). The focus is again on English speech sounds, but as this language is not quite so good for illustrating the whole range of manners of articulation found in other languages, the author chooses to deviate from the modern lingua franca and introduce other manners of articulation encountered in languages of the world (trills, taps and flaps). Detailed explanations of these are needed for the chapter to follow.

*The International Phonetic Alphabet* is the topic of Chapter 8 whose main objective is to enhance the reader's understanding of VPM data for the sounds given in the 1996 version of the IPA chart. Additional symbols and diacritics needed for the representation of other speech sounds that human beings are capable of producing are also fully explained. This chapter may be seen as a rounding off of the concepts previously learnt.

The final two chapters provide a further extensive account of consonants. Their suggestive titles, *More about consonant variation* and *Yet more about consonants: secondary articulations*, promise exactly that. Important consonantal phonetic features such as aspiration and glottalization are dealt with in Chapter 9 of *Speech Sounds*, with numerous practical exercises and illustrative voicing diagrams. Chapter 10 revisits the concept of double articulation briefly mentioned earlier in the workbook, and also introduces several highly important secondary articulations, namely labialization, palatalization and velarization, together with their

respective notational diacritics, with examples galore from English and other languages of the world.

Now that the reader is fully equipped with the necessary tools for analyzing language data, some advice is offered in the Appendix on how to put this newly acquired knowledge of phonetics into use: speech therapy, forensic phonetics, voice coaching, accent coaching, etc. all await the student of phonetics.

The author's affiliation to the London School of Phonetics and her considerable experience as a phonetics teacher brings her story of the study of

speech very much to life. Patricia Ashby's book complies with all standards of user-friendliness: her explanations of phonetic concepts are short, illustrative and straightforward, but they do not, by any means, lack the essential technical terms. Such phonetic terminology is introduced with an easy flow and utmost caution so that a student is not put off by the technicalities. The author's motto may be summarized in the following way: keep it simple and be systematic. This is exactly what Patricia Ashby does to help the reader "hone his/her basic phonetic skills to quite a high level".

---

**Rui Carvalho Homem and Maria Maria de Fátima Lambert eds., *Writing and Seeing: Essays in Word and Image*, Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2006. 403pp.**

*Fabio L. Vericat (Madrid, Spain)*

---

If seeing is believing, language does not stand a chance. The increasing interest in the relation between language and images has become a productive way to reflect on the word's representational status. The visual paradigm easily fools the observer into a sense of cognitive transparency, just as language seems unable to go further than metaphors, and hence is fated to relate to the world only obliquely. As this collection of essays amply testifies, it is a little more complicated than that. It does so at length with the aid of just over thirty articles, four hundred pages of words, and a few images. Painting looms large in this anthology, and it is used variously to shed light on literary writing. Ford Madox Ford, *Vita Fortunati* tells us, developed his narrative technique "by studying Holbein's paintings, as well as the numerous historical paintings by his grandfather Ford Madox Brown" (101). The mediation of the visual arts via literary writing on the section dedicated to A. S. Byatt, testifies to the fact that the literary evocation of famous paintings, which the reader may call to the memory's eye, cast as much doubt on the mimetic status of painting as it does on the writing which seeks in the former a cure for the conceptual abstraction to which the word seems condemned.

Ekphrasis, in various guises, is the point of origin of this anthology, which, passing through later stages of visual reproduction – namely photography – arrives as its final destination, the visuality of writing on the page, in the form of typography and textual layout. The reader is taken through a process than ranges from seeing through writing to writing as the object of perception, or, as Gil Maia puts it in the title of her article, "When what you see is what you read." The conventions of the paragraph, she

tells us, are just that, a convention which thinly disguises that the text is really an affair of the eyes, so that "any graphic arrangement of information that forgoes the linear sequence will inevitably generate a text layout that will be closer to a drawing than to that which we understand as text" (382).

Jesus Cora's contribution, in turn, is an erudite source-analysis which investigates the relationship between John Donne's verse and Arcimboldo's paintings of composite heads, with reference to Plato and George Herbert, but also Roland Barthes and C. S. Peirce. Thus it offers a good set of philosophical referents on the subject by introducing important technical concepts early in the volume, if only to mention, Peirce's "intermedial iconicity" which he utilizes to untangle the word-image question. The American *pragmaticist* also rears his head in several other contributions, but it is Cora who best clarifies Peircian semiotics. His thesis is daring and potentially ground-breaking, but one remains unsure whether the ground does not give way, instead, under the weight of his theoretical baggage, in which he is clearly well versed. The theory-laden first half of the article sounds prescriptive, asking the reader, in effect, to take conclusions as premises: "I indeed believe to have identified and decoded Donne's original composition technique and the real purpose and nature of the text. I do believe that it is still possible to do and say such a thing in these our postmodernist and poststructuralist days." The fear of relativism, which one quite shares, need not be combated with an absolute hermeneutic, especially if it is only our own – *that* is relative indeed. The visual illustrations of the textual argument come at the end, which makes one suspect a betrayal of the volume's principles: the interrelation between image

and text. The image Cora wants us to look at arrives already heavily textualized by theory. This is an important formal point which can be brought to bear on the book as a whole.

Adriana Baptista's contribution raises some important questions in this respect. She considers the word-image question in terms of the relationship between photography and the caption. Her agenda is that of enlarging the textual status of the caption and redeem its status from a mere appendix of the image: that "captions are produced as a function of images" (259). Baptista's motivation is that "the study of the relation between text and image rarely contemplates the captioned picture" (260), forgetting, perhaps, Walter Benjamin's seminal contribution to the subject in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." The problem is hardly the appropriation of the caption by and into the photograph; it is rather the opposite, the prescriptive reading with which captions do in fact textualize images. Baptista does well, nevertheless, to explore a meeting point between the word and the image that retains the qualities of its individual components: "shaken not stirred." It is what she calls a "rhetoric of attraction" and what Cora would call "intermedial iconicity." Yet, in so doing Baptista gives away her own textual leanings – why rhetoric? Baptista's philosophical mastery of the subject is obvious, and she is persuasive with abstract terms, yet, again, the actual analysis of the photographic samples are relegated to the back seat.

Baptista's consideration of the photographic work of Karen Knorr and Tracy Moffat is a final anecdote by way of *illustrating* her own textual competence, which puts in the spotlight her assertion that "pictures exclusively surrounded by caption texts cannot be considered illustrations" (259). Her article is surely no 'caption,' which makes the two photographs reproduced in it just that, 'illustrations'. Yet, one keeps asking what exactly Baptista means by the difference between 'caption' and 'full text' in the presence of images; how each may or may not be said to keep to the "rhetoric of attraction" she proposes. Is her article 'caption' or 'full text' in their relation to Knorr's and Moffat's photographs? Is there not a secret desire that all images may be treated as textually domesticated illustrations?

Peter E.D. Muir's article investigates how Peirce's semiotics are utilized by the contributors of *October* magazine, namely Rosalind Krauss handling of the Peircian index. It is an alternative take on Peirce's semiotics to Cora's. Krauss is quoted as saying that "the visual is linked with the verbal and the verbal with the visual, in short the image becomes a form of

a text, and that text can be analysed in semiotic and social terms" (268). This article points to Cora's contribution, but also supplements Baptista's missing Benjamin, as Krauss is again quoted, this time herself quoting from 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction': "The directives which the captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines,' he writes, 'soon become even more explicit and more imperative in the film where the meaning of preceding ones.' In film each image appears from within a succession that operates to internalize the caption, as narrative" (272). That the quotes are Krauss's, rather than Muir's goes to show, though, his over-reliance on the *October* contributor.

Muir is looking in the right direction, however discretely, and the anthology as a whole could have done with more on the visual narrative of cinema to balance the emphasis put on ekphrasis. There is some work on TV adaptations of literary works, but they do little more than see it as an effective means to reach a wider audience. Yet, there is the interesting contribution which gets closer to the issue of visual narrative, with reference to the practice of film-making in the field of anthropology. Michaela Schäuble looks at three filmmakers whose anthropological films resist the scientific orthodoxy of using film-footage as *illustrations* which meekly respond to the needs of theorizing with words. This resistance is enabled through a visual narrative based on local myth (rather than science) or by reaching a visual abstraction that will not be spoken for. Her analysis of the films are not merely sympathetic corroborations of her thesis, but critically insightful in their own right. Still, one cannot help thinking that the article could have profited from theoretical work, like Garrett Stewart's *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis*.

The point is that one must do more than offer image illustrations simply as evidence of the ekphratic accuracy of our use of words; for one has to be careful about this when *theorizing* about the image. Here we should heed T. S. Eliot's advice and follow Dante's example:

Dante, more than any other poet, has succeeded in dealing with his philosophy, not as a theory (in the modern and not the Greek sense of that word) or as his own comment or reflection, but in terms of something *perceived*. (T. S. Eliot, "Dante" in *The Sacred Wood*)

People tend to *see* things as we *tell* them, and *not* to see *what* we say. But perhaps the trap is unavoidable whenever we write about images, or whenever one writes at all. Or is it? James A. W. Heffernan's opening article deliberately chooses not

to include the paintings he refers to in his text. As he informs us in the first of his footnotes: "All pictures cited in this article may be found on the five-page website <http://lab.dartmouth.edu/jim/index.htm>" (25). Leaving the pictures outside the textual space does provide a visual integrity for the pictures. *Writing and Seeing* is not always able to reproduce all the illustrations for us to see. It would have made an expensive book. Heffernan thus finds a way to give us an opportunity to see all the images he refers to, but does so by placing them in their own (hyper)space.

The title of Heffernan's article title – "Speaking for Pictures" – must be understood as a warning: Even as he keeps paintings and language formally apart, the twist of this article is that the images he is talking about are so-called abstract paintings, a genre he uses to argue that visuality is inherently an act that seeks figurative conceptualization, but to which the visual arts cannot claim a natural prerogative; any more, that is, than the literary arts. He argues that the passage between abstraction and figuration is precisely what reading is also about. Abstraction goes to show that visual art is as much about reading as reading is an act of seeing. This is *not* about literary ekphrasis with its hidden desire to import the illusion of transparency of the visual arts into writing, nor is it about the self-appointed authority of texts to *speak for* pictures, thus reduced to mere illustrations.

In effect the contributions are brief and their presentation is not always suited to it, as one sometimes feels short-changed for the investment of one's attention, which could have easily been stretched a little bit further. The traces of contributions' oral origins, as conference papers, does cramp their textual delivery at times; though, in the case of José Jiménez's last but most eloquent contribution, this oral quality punches on us like a well-oiled typewriter by way of a layout composed of short and effective paragraphs. This rhetorical tactic makes good his argument that "the language of printing restores [the corporeal character of the letter], however; for the typewritten letters are 'bodies.' These signs spread over the most diverse media (be it paper, canvas, a wall or a computer screen) have a form as well as moulding the meaning" (389). Jiménez starts his argument with reference to the visual poetry of the Avant-Garde which he trans-historically links with the Greek conception of art. *Téchne mimetiké* made no distinction between the arts (poetry, sculpture, painting) which held the image – or *root of forms*, which stands as his article's title – as its common

bond. Jiménez hails a return to it in the age of the digital revolution.

Anne Price-Owen is even more explicit about the significance of digital media in her "From Medieval Manuscripts to Postmodern Hypertexts in the Art of David Jones." She is interested in the visuality of writing as manuscript and typography. She notes that David Jones "relies solely on the lettering on order to communicate his ideas" (356) and his project was to "make a shape in words." Jones was inspired by the medieval monk in the scriptorium and their practice, among others, to elaborate capital letters into hybrid shapes in-between figures and letters, or that of leaving space on the page to allow for supplementing marginalia – which is at the heart of the Medieval Commentary Tradition. This antiquarianism becomes forward looking the moment Price-Owen re-interprets this medieval practice as hypertextual with Jones as the middle-man between the medieval tradition of manuscript illuminators and the digital age. This move is very enlightening and topical but remains a little forced. One misses, at least, a passing reference to contemporary hypertext theory of which there is a lot to choose, like Stuart Moulthrop's "You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media." This is, allegedly, the genuine melting pot of the contemporary word-image debate. Despite the expectations raised by the title of her article, the hypertext remains a token reference.

The editors' 'Introduction' entrenches their project "notably but not exclusively in the plural discursive grounds of poststructuralism and postmodernity" (11). One wonders what other 'plural discursive grounds' they are referring to. For the ones they mention – if it is Barthes and Foucault c.s. they have in mind – are not comprehensive or contemporary enough in what is an area virtually exploding with new approaches. Conversely, the volume does cover a surprising number of areas staying true to their commitment to interdisciplinarity: visual arts, anthropology, media studies, film, photography, classical philosophy, and, of course, literature. The article on Japanese *Shojo manga* for instance, poses a very interesting question on how the comic genre has affected *literary* narrative, as well as introducing us to a genre which most of us had previously ignored, and which proves well worth our attention. One can hardly ask for more, but one should legitimately expect more. How about the digital media including hyper-text, digital art, or computer games? On the whole it is canonical Literature that casts the most persistent shadow over this book. It is as it should be, but for how much longer?



---

**Clive Upton and J. D. A. Widdowson. *An Atlas of English Dialects.***

London: Routledge, 2006 (second edition), 215 pp.

*Biljana Radić-Bojanić (Novi Sad, Serbia)*

---

The second edition of *An Atlas of English Dialects* by Clive Upton and J. D. A. Widdowson is based on the Survey of English Dialects, the most extensive record of English regional speech and one of the earliest modern dialect enquiries. The fieldwork for this massive endeavour was conducted on 313 mainly rural localities in England between 1948 and 1961, when elderly, locally-born people with little formal education were interviewed. The maps in this atlas are based on the findings in the Survey, but the boundaries have occasionally been redrawn so as to accommodate the changes that have taken place since then, and to suit the commentaries which accompany maps in the *Atlas*.

The *Atlas* starts with a nine-page Introduction, where Upton and Widdowson explain the importance of dialect study, its origins as regards the English language and the most important results, one of them being the Survey of English Dialects. The authors explain why English is still a language of dialects despite the immense influence of radio, television, newspapers and the internet, and stress the fact that a language which has been spoken in an area for 15 centuries has had sufficient time to develop enough diversity. Next, the authors provide an interesting and accurate account of numerous influences onto the language that today we call English, including invaders like the Anglo-Saxons and everything their settlement brought to the island. Besides raw facts, we find most interesting and relevant socio-historical facts which have shaped not only the face of Old English, but of Modern English as well. The presence of Vikings on English soil illustrates how languages in contact instigate the merger of identities, which is even more evident in a later period of Norman invasion. At the end of this section the revival and rehabilitation of English as a national language is described and, with considerably less detail, the authors rush through the times of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Swift into the present day, finishing with the rise of Standard English and forces that pull away from it. The final section in the Introduction is a set of valuable instructions on how to use the *Atlas*.

A two-page key to pronunciation (10-11) is followed by two maps (12-13) which show boundaries before 1974 and in 2005. The first map relates to the Survey of English Dialects, which refers

to the pre-1974 state of affairs, while the second shows boundary changes that have taken place since then.

The ninety maps and accompanying commentaries have been organized in a largely thematic manner. The first 25 maps cover vowels and consonants and are followed by 10 maps which deal with morphology and syntax. The lexical section of the material covered is broadly divided into people (5 maps), the body (4 maps), states and conditions (14 maps), animals (7 maps), nature (5 maps), objects (4 maps), seasons and times (4 maps), and actions (12 maps). Each map can be found on the left hand side, on the even page, with its respective commentary on the right hand side, on the odd page. This makes it very easy to survey, scan and follow the *Atlas*, a feature that is further supported by the detailed bibliography at the end of the *Atlas*, the index of linguistic terms, the index of maps, and the general index. The commentaries for each map use the same conventions as the maps themselves, where upper case lettering is used for words and phonetic script is used for pronunciation variants. Furthermore, italic type is used for historical forms of words and words of particular interest which are not the subject of the map. Finally, bold upper case is used for the first mention of a linguistic term which is normally accompanied by a definition, example or near synonym. Maps in the *Atlas* are concerned with the territory of England including the Isle of Man and Monmouthshire, meaning that the isoglosses indicating dialect boundaries stop at the Scottish and Welsh borders. The authors stress that the dialect areas shown on the maps are based on generalizations and the labels within them only refer to dominant dialectal forms. Also, they point out that isoglosses are not firm boundaries, but are always moving as the language changes through time.

Each commentary accompanying a map is a treasure in itself. The amount and range of information is impressive, the explanation simple and clear. Most commentaries contain more facts than can be found on corresponding maps and, in addition to this, cross-refer to relevant books which contain pertinent information for the points in question, such as Baugh and Cable's *A History of the English Language* (1993), Wright and Wright's *An Elementary Historical New English Grammar*

(1924), Brown's *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993) and Trudgill's *The Dialects of England* (1986). Furthermore, there are occasional cross-references to other maps in the *Atlas*, which is of great help for the readers aiming at the broad

picture. All in all, the *Atlas of English Dialects* is a valuable, panoramic tool both for beginners in dialects studies and linguistics in general, and for experts who are in need of a well-organized, concise and well-written source of information.

---

**Jonathan Culpeper.** *History of English*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.  
London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 134 pp.

Johanna L. Wood (Aarhus, Denmark)

---

The stated goal of Routledge's *Language Workbook* series is to "provide absolute beginners with practical introductions to core areas of language study", and this new edition of Jonathan Culpeper's 1997 text, with its straightforward explanations liberally interspersed with short exercises, does exactly that. As the author states, the exercises and points for discussion are important in involving readers in the commentary as well as moving beyond it, and sometimes the exercises could form the basis for more extensive projects. Also essential for readers who want to move beyond the basics are the suggestions for further reading, and these may be found not only at the end of each chapter but also in an appendix of general reading and, new for this edition, in an appendix containing internet resources. Suggested readings are wide ranging and include classics, such as Mary Serjeantson's *History of Foreign Words in English* (1935), as well as more modern texts, such as Laura Wright's *The Development of Standard English* (2000).

This second edition, in a new crisp modern font and layout, is similar in organization to the first, and the chapter titles are identical, except there is one fewer; the chapter on punctuation has been dropped. The five appendices from the first edition have expanded to seven, with the addition of the IE family tree and internet sources. The author's statement that he has made "wide-ranging changes to the text" becomes clear once the text is examined. For example, the first edition simply states that, according to Bede, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes arrived in England in the year AD 449. However, the second edition opens up a more sophisticated approach, pointing out that Bede was writing 400 years after the event, and that people who write histories often have their own agendas to fill. The discussion also touches on how archaeological evidence might offer counter arguments to Bede's description of mass destruction and the flight of the Britons. Other welcome changes include the expansion of parts of the chapter on standardisation to include ideas such as "dialect

continuum" and the difference between regional and social dialects.

An important decision which authors writing on the history of English have to make, and one that perhaps reflects their ideology and intended audience, is how to start, that is, what approach to take in the first chapter. Albert Baugh and Thomas Cable (fifth edition, 2002), for example, discuss the relationship between language and culture and English's role as an "important" language in the world. John Algeo and Thomas Pyles (fifth edition, 2004) attempt to define and characterise human language. Barbara Fennell (2001) focuses on contact induced change in her discussion of internal and external change. Elly van Gelderen (to appear) explores various definitions of "English" and in doing so discusses the historical origins of English, synthetic and analytic languages, internal and external change, and prescriptivism. Unlike any of these, Culpeper approaches the history of English from the point of view of placenames, a topic many lay people find interesting and one likely to appeal to the intended audience of "absolute beginners". Although such a topic is difficult to sustain past the eleventh century, he manages by bringing up the role of personal names of powerful families in the ME period and deftly finishing with a mention of globalisation, leading into it with reference to the transfer of placenames to parts of the world outside England through colonisation.

The second chapter, "Investigating change in English" introduces the study of change by taking the reader through the different texts in the appendix, through the different historical periods, and through the different linguistic levels. Here also is the theoretical core of the book. Possible reasons for change are said to include language contact, speaker attitudes, and the fact that language operates as a structural system. Changes in one part of the system, for example the addition of <h> in the spelling of *throne*, under the influence of Latin, led to changes in pronunciation. "Regularity" is said to be important in language change although it is not clear what this

means, and whether it is related to analogy. Analogy is not mentioned in this chapter, but later, in the chapter on verbs, it is said to be “a process involved in many language changes.” Missing here is any reference to language change in terms of child acquisition and grammar building. The chapter ends with a debunking of “folk beliefs” that written language is best.

Subsequent chapter headings are “Spellings and speech sounds,” “Borrowing words,” “New words from old,” “Changing meanings,” “Grammar I: nouns,” “Grammar II: verbs,” “Dialects in British English,” “Standardisation,” and “World Englishes.” In the chapter on semantic change, as well as the traditional description of change as specialisation, generalisation, amelioration, and pejoration, a new section in the second edition includes examples of how semantic change tends towards more abstract and textual meanings, as put forward in Elizabeth Traugott’s work, although the word “grammaticalization” is not mentioned. It is refreshing to find this topic broached, albeit briefly, as the traditional approach is theoretically dissatisfying as the author seems to imply. It is, however, a difficult topic to explain briefly and at this level, although those who wish to follow it up will find a suggestion in the end of chapter readings.

For students at all levels, not just beginners, experience with texts is essential and there is a useful selection of representative texts included in the appendix. Some of these, for example Caxton’s prologue to the *Eneydos* and the extract from John of Trevisa’s *Poly-chronicon*, do double duty as contemporary comments on the language. In the second edition a version in the insular hand has been added to text 1, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The Shakespeare passages of text 5 have been replaced by a passage from the *Merrie Tales of Skelton* and the extract from Lowth’s grammar has been completely dropped. Although these selections are short, suggestions of where to find additional texts are included.

Some corners are cut in the interest of brevity and simplicity, such as leaving out Albanian, Armenian, Anatolian, and Tocharian from the Indo-European family tree. Traditionalists will miss certain topics usually found in text books such as this. For example there is no entry for *umlaut* or for Grimm’s or Verner’s laws in the index, although mention is made of the change from initial [k] to [h] with reference to Italian-English pairs such as *cape-head*. This is offset by treatment of topics more likely to appeal to this audience, such as variation

in modern English, current changes in pronunciation, and the Great Vowel Shift’s effect on the spelling system. Emphasis appears to be on phonological and lexical change, and syntacticians will miss mention of topics such as V2 (verb second) and only cursory references to Jespersen’s cycle and OV word order.

Culpeper states in his introduction that “no account is entirely free of controversy,” and some of his assertions could use further qualification. For example, the statement that “SVO languages generally lack case inflections, whereas SOV languages generally have them” (61) can be contested with reference to two of English’s nearest language relatives: Dutch (OV and no case) and Icelandic (VO and case). I would also take issue with the statement (p. 36) that borrowing occurs on all linguistic levels including sentences (the example is *Je ne sais quoi*). In this same section, *-ette* in *kitchenette* is a good example of morphological borrowing (French affix and Germanic root), but that the <x> in *gâteaux* is an example of a borrowed plural marker is a much more controversial statement.

The text is written from an “English English” perspective and the key words for suggested pronunciations are based on RP pronunciation. Those who teach the history of English to non-native speakers in Europe and who prefer a comparative approach may not find this a particularly suitable text, as reference to other languages is mostly on the lexical level. Second language learners are generally comfortable with topics such as case, inflection, and variable word order and may find some sections a little too elementary. On the other hand, depending on their level of competence, they may find it quite challenging when asked about regional variation e.g. to guess where in Britain the vowels in *face* and *road* are pronounced as monophthongs or when asked to supply stereotypical characteristics associated with regional dialects.

Throughout the text reference is made to websites where, for example, different pro-nunciations may be heard. Since there is so much excellent on-line material available now, it makes sense for a book of this nature to include references to internet resources. That some links are already out of date is beyond the author’s control, although it highlights the need for books of this type to have companion websites where, among other things, links can be updated regularly. In all, this is a brief but engaging account of the history of English designed to catch the interest of beginners and to start them thinking critically about linguistic issues.

---

**Sarah Cardwell, *Andrew Davies. The Television Series.***

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. 240 pp.

*Anthony Barker (Aveiro, Portugal)*

---

Dr Johnson once said that it is hard for a translator to get more than he deserves, and an adapter is a kind of sub-author, like a translator. So if you combine this neglect with the critical climate of post-‘Death of the Author’, you get a formulation like that which Frankenstein intones over his inert monster: “He’s not dead. He’s never been alive!” Andrew Davies is perhaps the most distinguished, certainly the most active, adapter of other people’s books for television. When one looks at the range and outreach of his work (26 television series, 28 single television films, 5 cinema releases), one is, like Sarah Cardwell, tempted to make a serious claim for the influence of his writing. But there are problems and Cardwell addresses them squarely. When your co-writer is Jane Austen or Daniel Defoe or George Eliot, exactly whose voice and whose concerns are being articulated?

Cardwell establishes clear criteria for being an author in your own right; indeed the second chapter on “Questions of Authorship” is among the best things in the book as a concise review of the issues involved. These include ‘an appropriate level of authorial control over the finished text or artwork’, ‘perceptible elements of individual expression’ (features of literary style or authorial voice) and thematically ‘some kind of discernible continuity (and possibly progression) across an oeuvre’ (34).

Much as one admires Davies’s industry and the quality of his series, all three categories raise serious reservations. Firstly, despite TV being a writer’s medium in Britain more than, say, film, it is still highly collaborative and control is always relative and dependent upon institutional factors. Davies’s BBC clout has certainly increased since his successes of the 1990s but he is still reliant on empathetic direction, the professional skills of production crews and budget to interpret his screenplays. This is a feature of artistic life for all makers of performance in highly capitalized arts. With adaptation for television, it is especially critical because the text, unlike serious drama, does not really exist outside its performance. Published screenplays exist for Davies’s admired forebear Dennis Potter, but then Potter is better known for his original plays than for his (many) adaptations. Significantly, Cardwell cannot drum up much enthusiasm for Davies’s single plays from the 1970s and 1980s, nor for his original series. She rightly identifies his liberal-left world view but is

unable to make it seem anything more stirring than a going with the multicultural-feminist *zeitgeist*. She also shows that he is no highbrow and works in popular forms like melodrama; he has even coauthored an engaging TV sitcom *Game On!* However, it must be said there is nothing as formally challenging in his work as Potter’s *Blue Remembered Hills*, nor as quirky as the central conceit for *The Singing Detective*, nor as controversial as Potter’s late plays of sexual fantasy. In category two therefore, a decent but no very resounding authorial voice emerges. Thematically, Cardwell argues that Davies questions social norms and conventions, and (as a former academic and successful writer for children) is concerned with issues in education and about the impact of the family. With the exception of works set in academia like *A Very Peculiar Practice* (1986), these concerns are seen to operate at such a general level that they could be said to infuse the work of many of his contemporaries. So there is not much that you could identify as a Davies obsession? It may seem illicit to mention it here but Cardwell’s excellent previous book *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel* (2002) takes up two of Davies’s acclaimed adaptations, *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) and *Moll Flanders* (1996), and discusses them for over 50 pages but does not feel the need to discuss the pressure of Davies’s personal concerns in these contexts; indeed the book only mentions him by name three times.

There are interesting chapters devoted to his adaptations of non-canonical works and to two freer reworkings, of *Othello* (2001) and *Dr Zhivago* (2002), both for ITV, but where Davies excels is in the (low-status) area of classic popularization, where to make a case for him as an *auteur* is to take on some institutionally-entrenched ideas. For example, how did it come about that you are either an author or a journeyman? Davies was not the first to put generous cleavages or repressed male passion in the classic novel adaptation (Jane Campion goes much further for example in *A Portrait of a Lady* [1996]), but he is the one to strike a successful balance between a sexually more aware modernity and respect for the historical dimension of the classics. It is no accident that Davies was asked to collaborate on the *Bridget Jones* films, and has made two accomplished adaptations of Kingsley Amis, *The Old Devils* and *Take a Girl like You*. His is a



non-doctrinaire style of adaptation, at one with the laddish/lassish literature of both Fieldings (Henry and Helen) and Nick Hornby. A certain relaxation in these matters characterizes his *Moll Flanders* (which Cardwell likes) and *Tipping the Velvet* (which she doesn't). Insofar as Davies is respectful, he forfeits individual identity and academic respect; insofar as he is adventurous, he polarizes his audiences into conservatives and modernizers. Cardwell's book, which belongs to a series seeking to recognize original artists in the television medium, is reaching for a televisual aesthetic on which to ground praise and distinction, but the old categories just do not help. Just as film had to traverse the willful misrepresentations of *auteurism* to gain its place in the academy, so television must navigate between crippling deference and tricky populism. For example, Davies has become associated with the perceived MTV-ization of the classics (witness his recent *Bleak House* which was parodied to perfection on the comedy show *Dead Ringers*, for its use of dramatic zooms, jump cuts, freeze frames and excessive chiaroscuro and dry ice effects). Television Dickens however is its own evolving genre, in which contemporary authors like David Lodge (*Martin Chuzzlewit*) and Peter Barnes (*Hard Times*) get to immerse themselves in Dickensian abundance and to write starring roles for leading TV actors and cameo parts for popular British comedy actors, which Davies here does for Charles Dance and Gillian Anderson (*The X Files*' Dana Scully), Johnny Vegas, Alistair

McGowan and others. *Bleak House* (2005) bears out my argument that Davies is a very skilled writer who has become something of a brand name but who remains, as director Robert Altman and screenwriter Michael Tolkin call their protagonist, just 'a player' in a collective endeavour. He cannot be wholly responsible for what his cast, crew and his two directors (Justin Chadwick and Susanna White) have done with his screenplay, nor what his producers intend for this production. It is someone's job to see which books are on school and exam courses, to connect the classic novel adaptation to a youthful demographic and to look to foreign sales. The evidence of *Bleak House* suggests that this person had recently been watching *Trainspotting*. Andrew Davies, for the moment, is the safe pair of hands who knows how to please both readers and non-readers alike. The aesthetic criteria for evaluating novel adaptations for television still do not exist, but a canon of classic series is forming and Davies's work is very prominent in it, as Cardwell amply shows.

On a practical level, the book is not as helpful as it might be on the availability of its subject's plays, series, films and adaptations. We are told that many of his works are 'not always readily available to view on video or DVD.' If television studies are to establish themselves and to flourish (and I imagine this is one of the aims of "The Television Series"), we need exactly this kind of information made known to us, as well as some discreet lobbying for its release to a wider public.

---

**Terttu Nevalainen, *An Introduction to Early Modern English*.** Edinburgh Textbooks on the English Language. Edinburgh University Press, 2006. 160 pp.

*Jacob Thaisen (Poznań, Poland)*

---

Some fifteen years ago, Manfred Görlach bemoaned the lack of undergraduate textbooks exclusively addressing Early Modern English (1991). Several general histories of English have appeared in the interim, including some prepared as textbooks like Elly van Gelderen's (2006), which even comes with a companion website. Various introductions to Shakespeare's English have likewise become available. Nonetheless, the volume here discussed, Terttu Nevalainen's contribution to the Edinburgh Textbooks on the English Language series under the general editorship of Heinz Giegerich is, as far as this reviewer is aware, the first publication that answers Görlach's call since the appearance of Görlach's own *Introduction to Early Modern English* of 1991. Both foster analysis of original texts

as a primary learning mechanism but a major difference between them is that Nevalainen targets students whereas Görlach seeks to equip their teacher with tools. The Nevalainen textbook's depth of coverage is accordingly less.

Nevalainen's lucid and commendably concise exposition is divided into ten chapters of equal length. Each concludes with a short summary, relevant study points, and helpful suggestions for further reading. Two slim appendices contain sample ENE texts, "ENE" here being the label applied to the English of the years 1500-1700: a conventional and convenient periodisation difficult to justify by language-internal or -external criteria as Nevalainen explains in chapter 1. The range of sources that are available to students of the period is described in

chapter 2. These include contemporary metalinguistic accounts as well as the profusion of other types of printed and handwritten materials that have survived. Some of these materials are freely available for study in electronic collections, like the diachronic part of the comprehensive, multi-genre Helsinki Corpus. In fact, in addition to the appended texts, many of Nevalainen's illustrative examples and statistics derive directly or indirectly from this particular corpus, and several of the study points require that the student access an electronic resource. This obviously represents an update relative to the Görlach volume, which in the then-absence of such resources includes a comprehensive anthology of contemporary texts that are extensively referenced in the descriptive chapters. Moreover, it amply demonstrates the advantages of a corpus-based approach. Yet the generic criticism holds that such an approach tends to treat texts as if they existed in a vacuum: unlike in Görlach, the editorial principles behind the appended texts are nowhere explained, nor are the difficulties involved in the decoding of Elizabethan handwriting discussed. The student is thus never alerted to the possibility that the occurrence of certain features, such as, notoriously, final -e, may be dictated by the requirements of a page's layout, although it is mentioned that modern editions often contain editorial punctuation (34).

The standardisation of English—the subject of chapter 3—has followed the stages defined by Einar Haugen (1966): selection and codification of form, and acceptance and elaboration of function. What Alexander Gil the Elder called the “General Dialect” is the one that Nevalainen picks as her exclusive focus throughout. Speakers had selected this “diffuse mainstream variety” (42) as a prestige norm, and the codification of its orthography had advanced far already by the close of the Middle English period. Its functional extension through lexical enrichment is what particularly characterises the ENE period, for the codification of its grammar and phonology only culminates after 1700. The external (borrowing) and internal (word-formation) mechanisms behind this enrichment are described in chapters 4 and 5 respectively. By contrast, the key concept “standardisation” has no entry in Görlach's index, although he defines ENE as “the period during which the London-based language spread outwards until relative homogeneity was achieved” (p. 11). And although he concentrates on this variety throughout, features present in other varieties are regularly brought in, notably Scots. Nevalainen's exclusive strategy is pedagogically

more successful because it makes her exposition focussed and so tailored to its undergraduate target audience, even if it defies the popular trend that beckons us duly to recognise non-standard varieties (for example in David Crystal's *The Stories of English* [2004] or Katie Wales' *Northern English* [2006]).

The Dialect's inflectional morphology is set out next, with the treatment of nouns and pronouns as chapter 6 and of verbs, adjectives, and adverbs as chapter 7. The sketch traces those features that exhibit change during the period and helpfully situates them within long-term trends in the history of English. The same applies to the treatment of syntax and phonology (chapters 8 and 9 respectively). Among those features, Nevalainen stresses the low relative frequency of double comparatives and double superlatives but, surprisingly, makes no mention of the restriction of the modal verbs to auxiliary functions and the concomitant rise of quasi-modals.

The organisation of the central descriptive chapters is innovative since phonology is traditionally dealt with first, although it is paralleled in Joan Beal's *English in Modern Times* (2004). Its organisation is successful, and properly motivated by a pedagogical concern first of all to familiarise students with key concepts and phenomena: for example, lexical enrichment from Romance languages increased the functional load of patterns with non-initial primary stress. The final chapter links up with the first ones in that it returns to the broader context. In it, Nevalainen situates ENE socially, addressing literacy and educational levels, urbanisation, and the printing press before touching on the geographical expansion of this variety into Ireland, North America, Scotland, and Wales.

If a critical note may be sounded, it would be that the punctuation provided in regular typeface within italicised phrases detracts from the otherwise neat layout of this book that [for example: “get; sank” (94), “bread!” (152)], and that words in bold are occasionally separated by double spaces (for example: 105, 107). But this does not essentially detract from the quality of a book which covers more ground than a general history of English is able to do while trying, at the same time, to avoid getting too specialised. Its successful strategy makes Terttu Nevalainen's introduction to Early Modern English so suitable for its target audience: students will no doubt stand to profit from their first reading on the subject as much as from the exercises to be made under the guidance of an instructor.

## References

- Beal, Joan C. *English in Modern Times: 1700-1945*. London: Hodder Arnold, 2004.
- Crystal, David. *The Stories of English*. London: Allen Lane, 2004.
- Görlach, Manfred. *Introduction to Early Modern English*. Revised edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Haugen, Einar. "Dialect, Language, Nation". *American Anthropologist* 68 (1966), 922-935.
- van Gelderen, Elly. *A History of the English Language*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006.
- Wales, Katie. *Northern English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

---

**Roger deV. Renwick and Sigrid Rieuwerts, eds. *Ballad Mediations. Folksongs Recovered, Represented and Reimagined*. Ballads and Songs – International Studies 2. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2006. 200 pp.**

*Gerald Porter (Vaasa, Finland)*

---

Western culture may privilege the spoken over the written word, but in universities the picture is often very different. If they exist at all, courses in oral literature and spoken narrative are more likely to be found in Nairobi and Kingston than in European departments of English: even post-colonial modules often fight shy of them. College anthologies usually include only a handful of examples by African Americans or specimens of a fictive category, the 'medieval ballad,' which usually consists exclusively of songs collected much later, such as 'Sir Patrick Spens' and 'the Wife of Usher's Well': as the Norton Anthology has now conceded, a better case could be made for speaking of 'the eighteenth-century ballad,' since in the middle ages the word meant something quite different.

A new series "Ballads and Songs – International Studies," from the International Ballad Commission (IBC), is intended to end such token representation with a series of focused studies, of which this is the second to appear. The very existence of the IBC goes some way towards explaining why oral studies became marginalized in university departments of English, since it was originally set up as a body that would address problems of classification along the lines of types of the folktale. As a result, cultural critics like Antony Easthope, John Holloway and Dave Harker, who were familiar with vernacular song and its place in popular print, had no real place in the Commission. *Ballad Mediations* succeeds in opening up oral literature to a new audience, not through texts and recordings (although more than twenty songs are reproduced in the book, many with music) but as a forum for discussion of all aspects of narrative song in the context not only of folklore and medieval studies, but sociology, literary and media studies and information technology. *Ballad Mediations* is an example of the change that

has taken place in the Commission in recent years. Of its twenty chapters, more than half address narrative song traditions, contemporary or near-contemporary, in numerous English and Scots-speaking communities where performing still plays a central role in affirming – and constructing – social identity. Other chapters deal with popular music, military chants, and societies where oral traditions have long been in symbiosis with Britain and America, such as the Hispanic *narcocorrido* (drug-smuggling narrative song) and Scandinavian ballads of seduction and transformation. Many of the papers explore transgressive gender issues: ballads were more often passed on by women than men, and openly raise themes like incest (the pan-Hispanic 'Delgadina' and the Swedish 'Proud Margjit'), child murder, as in 'The Cruel Mother' and 'Lamkin' (which prompted John Banville's first novel), and shifting sexual identities.

Subjects like drug trafficking and sexual abuse point to the main preoccupation of the volume, which is with mediation and transformation, between print and performance, between English and other languages, between the Old World and the New World. In his wide-ranging review of traditional balladry in the United States, which closes the book but would paradoxically be a good place to start, Roger deV. Renwick raises an aspect of song collecting that is familiar to postcolonial studies: early collectors concentrated on eliciting from singers narrative songs that were not only in English but were also linked to America's European cultural ancestry. This naturally skewed their collecting activities. However, by the 1930s this was no longer the case. Renwick prints five songs from the family papers of John Lomax, the leading American collector of traditional songs at the time. They include an African American blues ballad (that

is, one where there is only minimal narrative development is not predominant), a sentimental parlor song and a 'distinctly non-heroic' Texas-Mexican *corrido*.

In addition to collecting, the book is naturally also concerned with questions of editing. These obviously include the opportunities the internet provides for giving access to broadside archives, for example, but also for reproducing far more nuances of a performance than simply text and melody. David Atkinson, in his important chapter on the editing of the huge Carpenter collection in the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, warns that editing a dynamic entity like a multimedia collection of folk culture is much more than a question of faithful reproduction. In the first place, the collector's own role and status, not to mention class and gender, in the presence of the singer is more likely to elicit some kinds of songs rather than others, and full rather than truncated texts. But the modern editor, even without the constraints that Victorian and earlier editors had to contend with, faces problems arising from the variety of methods of recording available, as well as the challenges of the new media themselves. Atkinson gives as an example the performance of a song 'The Maid Freed from the Gallows,' sung by an Oxfordshire man. It exists as a deleted MS version, a rough typescript, a fair copy, two music notations, a cylinder recording and a disc copy, all apparently diverging from each other. In short, numerous decisions have to be taken about representation and format before the song can even begin to be considered as a social text.

The choices and selection criteria followed by singers, collectors and editors apply equally, of

course, to *Ballad Mediations* itself. Like most oral studies, the book gives priority to the individual performer over the group: the three exceptions are Richard Allen Burns' study of American military marching songs, which emphasizes the role of such chants in demonizing the (unknown) enemy in Iraq, as in every earlier war; Judith Cohen's observation, in the course of a paper on editing Alan Lomax's recordings, of the way the Spanish *romance* can also accompany work and ritual; and Sabine Wienker-Piepho's study of a nineteenth century satire on 'typical' Germans in America. This last study is significant as an early example of the targeting of a group resisting assimilation (as with Hispanics today), at a time when there was a real possibility that German would become the lingua franca of the United States.

With my remarks at the beginning of this review in mind, future volumes in the series should certainly attempt to look beyond Britain and North America. Renwick himself has written on Caribbean transformations of the Anglo-American ballad. However, this entails some risk, since the narrative song is no longer seen by singers, collectors or editors as a stable, discrete genre but one that is constantly feeding into, and being replenished by, anthems, chants, jokes and recitations. Following recent practices in the field of folklore, many of the contributors to the volume see songs primarily as performance. This is, however, inadequate in many parts of Africa and the Caribbean, where narrative traditions are valued as history and where songs are tied to political, social and land rights. While rather diffuse and in places uneven, *Ballad Mediations* offers a very useful overview of an increasingly dynamic and changing field.

---

**Rachel Falconer. *Hell in Contemporary Literature: Western Descent Narratives since 1945*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. 262 pp.**

*Işil Baş (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)*

---

We live in a terrifying, aggressive and, in many ways, grotesque world, and it is no wonder that the dominant mode, not just in art and literature but also in criticism, is apocalyptic. Hence while aiming to analyze the descent narratives in the Western literary canon since 1945, the perspective that frames Rachel Falconer's narrative is inevitably post 9/11, and this from the opening paragraph of Falconer's introduction, which refers to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's famous description of New York after the attack as "Dante's Hell." Is there a more appropriate opening to a book on the "katabatic imagination," or, as the

writer has it, "a world view which conceives of selfhood as the narrative construct of an infernal journey and return" (2)? Falconer not only analyses the impact of a vast inheritance of literary and theological myths on post-1945 Western descent narratives into hell but also confronts the difficult question of where this "hell" really might be. One unifying theme of such works by Primo Levi, Sarah Kofman, W.G. Sebald, Anne Michaels, Lauren Slater, Marge Piercy, Angela Carter, Margaret Atwood, Gloria Naylor, Alice Notley, Alasdair Gray, Salman Rushdie and others as well as memoirs and films like



Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* and the *Matrix* trilogy, she claims, is the continuing significance of suffering in the modern world. Hence she also offers perspectives on and insights into why these notions exist within human life, thought, belief and practice. Often she interrupts her narrative to comment on world politics and on secular hells like the Holo-caust, the death camps in Eastern Europe, the Soviet gulags, and the modern penal system as enactments of earlier katabatic visions.

Falconer quotes generously from her sources which are both classical and contempo-rary, ranging from Virgil and Dante to Freud, Adorno, Bakhtin, Levinas, Derrida, Butler, and Ricoeur. Her book is, therefore, highly informative, but the vast range of refer-ences it pro-vides may well distract and confuse the reader, certainly as it gets in the way of a more in-depth discussion of central issues like why modern mind finds hell more seductive than para-dise. Another problem with her approach is that she keeps on explaining the entire post-1945 imagination in terms of the Holocaust experience. This centralizing strategy causes her to refer to the event in every theoretical claim she makes at the expense of contradicting herself when, for example, she argues that the spatial con-finement in Nazi camps was carefully and systematically constructed to create loss of auto-nomy, a claim that seems to be forgotten after a few pages when she writes that "the worst Nazi crimes occurred as a result of banal, routine decision making" (29).

Falconer is on firmer ground when she discusses individual texts and films, which she handles with wit and eye for detail. She is especially vigorous and evocative in her discussion of contemporary memoirs of mental illness as structured and narrated like journeys of descent. While drawing parallels between the accounts of actual sufferers and the schizoid cultures in which they live, Falconer also includes those poststructuralist discussions against the narrativisation or rationalization of such chaotic experiences. Moreover, she analyses these memoirs as exemplifying the two main opposing strains she finds in descent narratives: as the quest for empowerment and self-possession and as a journey of dispossession.

In the chapter entitled "Engendering Dissent in the Underworld," Falconer makes an important observation. She argues that "Female characters, by definition, are usually excluded from descent because they are already in the underworld" (144). Therefore, she notes:

[w]hereas the descent to Hell provided male writers of the twentieth century with a narrative structure capable

of conveying the dispersals and dissolutions of modern identity while at the same time paradoxically claiming both authority over the frag-mented self and a place in the patrilinear tradition, contemporary Western women writers are drawing on katabatic narrative to express the uneasy and contradictory relationship between female subjectivity and patriarchal culture. (147)

The idea that, in traditional thinking, women belong to the underworld, is hardly new, but it seems that it has been fully symbolized in katabatic narratives. Falconer argues that the gendered dynamic is apparent from ancient Greek myths where the male hero's object and medium of quest is almost always female to Lacan's account of the stratification of the psyche in terms of male overworld and female underworld. To her analysis of contemporary world literature such as *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami and *This Side of Bright-ness* by Colum McCann one might add the novels of Orhan Pamuk with their predominant focus on the "labyrinthine journey" of a male protagonist in search of a woman and his lost soul. Yet, as Falconer also observes, descent provides something else too: the potential for trans-gression. Thus, if the real Hell is the "overworld" for women, then the alternative is an escape to the underground, or, in Falconer's witty wordplay, "dissent." In line with this feminist alternative Falconer continues to analyze several novels by contemporary women writers which have what she calls "a utopian impulse." Of course, here one should note that the experiences of fictional women in this chapter, who are either the objects of quest in traditional descent narratives or heroines who descend to stay in utopian fiction, may be profitably contrasted to the different experiences of actual women writing their memoirs.

It is interesting and challenging to read "fact" alongside "fiction." In fact, it is the book's greatest strength. "Pushing to the limits" is how Falconer describes the contemporary world and this is what she herself does. Not only does the book challenge "the traditional chro-no-topic representations of Hell as temporally fixed and spatially distanced" but it also lays bare the intricate connections between art and life. By contextualizing one of the most im-portant and recurring themes of Western imagination, I believe, Falconer's book, itself, represents another descent, an impressive, epic journey into the unconscious of the Western cultural heritage. What emerges at the end, is a heightened awareness of contemporary political and social issues and a sense of the possibility of discovering an alternative perspective responding to our "historically infernal condition."

**Roberta Imboden, *The Dark Creative Passage: A Derridean Journey from the Literary Text to Film*. Trier: WVT, 2005. 166 pp.**

Joost de Bloois (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

---

Although it claims to take Derrida as its point of departure, Roberta Imboden's *Dark Creative Passage* pays little homage to Jacques Derrida's thought. It is insufficiently informed of the philosophy that is its alleged source of inspiration, and because of this disfigurement (to use the painterly terms that Imboden draws on) it also fails properly to address its central topic. Using Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind* (a study accompanying an exhibition of drawings from the collection of the Louvre that Derrida himself curated, and which is centered around the genre of self-portraiture and the theme of blindness), it proposes to tackle the complexities of cinematic adaptations of literary works such as Peter Greenaway's *The Pillow Book* and Denys Arcand's *Jesus of Montreal*. In fact, by analogy to Derrida's interpretation of the act of drawing and painting, it presents the passage from the literary work to the film screen as representative of the creative process itself. However interesting this may seem, *The Dark Creative Passage* runs into a cul-de-sac as it fails convincingly to represent Derrida's ideas as a useful tool for addressing the problematics of translation from one medium to another.

In particular, the deliberately narrative framework of this study, presenting itself as a 'journey' into to 'the dark creative passage' of its title, is predominantly unproductive. The author poses as a modern-day Virgil: "once again we leave our midnight study [...] to travel across a millennium," is a typical example. The adopted format has no real critical meaning, as Derrida's more experimental ways of writing do: when Derrida has recourse to stylistic experiment, he does so trying to address questions in ways not allowed by traditional modes of philosophical writing and subsequent thinking. In its repetitiveness, the narrative framework of Imboden's study rather constitutes an obstacle to innovative thought: it quickly becomes a stereotypical figure of style that prevents the author from thorough close reading and delivering insightful conclusions. Moreover, one wonders how the author, as a reader of Derrida, could have missed the teleological nature of the journey metaphor.

This study's main theoretical reference, *Memoirs of the Blind*, is undoubtedly one of Derrida's more appealing texts on visual culture: in it, Derrida states

that the condition enabling visual art lies in a primary 'looking away' from the original subject. Even the self-portrait can only exist because of a gap, however small, in the immediate presence of the artist to himself. In brief: the creative passage constitutes the moment when the artists turns away from her/his model to transfer its image to the canvas, having recourse to memory and the subsequent risk of forgetting. The condition for the reappearance of the model on the canvas is thus a moment of blindness, of not-seeing the model. Imboden's study interestingly presents the passage from page to screen as such a mode of 'looking away.'

Unfortunately, though, it leaves too many preliminary questions unanswered. To begin with, it fails to notice an important passage taking place within its choice of object, film. It merely projects Derrida's analysis of paintings unto cinematographic works. Whereas the conceptual vocabulary which Derrida uses in *Memoirs of the Blind* (light/darkness being its pivotal components) is fundamental to painting and drawing, it is perhaps only secondary to film (suture, montage and movement being its key notions). Moreover, Derrida's essays on the visual arts are themselves already a projection of his text-based philosophy of deconstruction unto the visual medium of painting – a passage that has indeed raised many questions. *The Dark Creative Passage* ignores this multiple layering. Instead, it presents the films studied as works of reading, ignoring film's (or painting's) medium-specificity. It all too literally refers to scenes that depict acts of reading and writing (hardly ever considering the texts that the films take to the screen). Surprisingly, it never addresses the basic question that poses itself on virtually every page: what happens in the various passages from the written sign to the cinematic apparatus? Why, one begins to wonder, is the author looking away from this fundamental issue?

Although the close analyses of the films themselves are interesting, they are mostly the result of juxtaposing Derrida's interpretations of the Louvre drawings and paintings with scenes from Greenaway or Arcand. Here it seems that, once more, the narrative framework of the book does not allow for a genuine critical evaluation and a fruitful usage of Derrida's ideas: the latter's critical concepts become mere

metaphors and his analysis of painting and drawing is indiscriminately projected onto late-twentieth-century film – the film scenes thus becoming static repetitions of the painterly tableaux. Even the frequent descriptions of scenes of calligraphy and inscription (in *The Pillow Book* or Minghella's *The English Patient*) remain just that: depictions without any surplus value (easily added by asking obvious questions raised by the fact that these are cinematic representations of the act of inscribing).

The author's use of Derrida's ideas takes on uncomfortable dimensions in the chapter on Denys Arcand's *Jesus of Montreal* and the concluding chapter of the study. Amidst elaborate depictions of film scenes we encounter phrases such as: 'we wonder if this statement which emerges from his hiddenness will eventually reveal something about

the human being, something about ourselves. Is this what our journey [...] across ancient sands signifies?' In all honesty, one simply cannot employ Derrida's thought in what reveals itself to be an ecumenical essay presenting the 'creative passage' as a passion-like experience. Reading the essay, 'we' are left with the question whether this is a study trying to tackle the uses of Derridean thought for the analysis of cinematic adaptations, or an enterprise of rather cosmic dimensions. With a final phrase depicting the contemporary subject as 'leaving the sacred darkness of this modern place of worship, the cinema theater,' *The Dark Creative Passage* crowns its failure both to grasp Derrida's ideas (not in the least by Christianizing him) and to contribute to the study of a particularly interesting film genre.

---

**Stan Smith, *Irish Poetry and the Construction of Modern Identity: Ireland between Fantasy and History*, Dublin / Portland OR: Irish Academic Press, 2005, x + 238 pp.**

*Greg Matthews (Washington State University, Pullman, WA, USA)*

---

In the last sentence of *Irish Poetry and the Construction of Modern Identity*, Stan Smith reveals that "an ambilocated space, the place of the hyphen" is the "true location" of the work of the poets covered in this book (219). This ultimate insight concludes an essay on the poetry of Belfast writer Ciaran Carson, in which Smith defines "ambilocation" as a "matter of being always in neither place, or of being between places, or of being always in one place which may be Belfast, but also at the same time in many other places, dis-located, relocated, mis-placed, displaced, everywhere and nowhere" (203).

Smith convincingly argues that this creative somewhere that does not appear on any map is the ironic *locus amoenus* of the Irish poet writing after Yeats. Less convincing is Smith's assertion that this creative nowhere is haunted by Yeats and Joyce, and anticipated by Beckett, and that their influence is a necessary referent (and sometime revenant) throughout the work considered here. Smith is a gifted close-reader with an Aristotelian eye for resemblances between diverse texts. His strongest arguments in support of the search or creation of identity as a central concern for modern Irish poets are based on readings that brilliantly unpack the historical, religious, allusory and etymological pieces that make up a poem. But why poetry? Smith ably shows in his careful readings how poets as diverse as Austin Clarke, Denis Devlin, John Montague and Medbh McGuckian deal with identity in their poetry, but he does not explicitly address why or whether

this particular form is uniquely suited to this theme. The question seems more urgent in light of Smith's reliance on readings of Joyce's prose fiction as a context for his criticism of modern Irish poetry.

On the other hand, this question may seek too narrow and arbitrary a focus for a book that concludes by affirming similitudes and peripheries as the things and places of modern Irish poetry. Smith structures his book chronologically, treating in earlier essays poets writing in high-modernist modes after Yeats and concluding with essays on the work of Derek Mahon, Paul Muldoon, and Ciaran Carson. Smith reveals how the poetry of earlier twentieth century writers such as Padraic Fallon, Brian Coffey, and Louis MacNeice clearly exhibit Yeats' powerful (and sometimes anxiety-inducing) influence, and goes on to articulate how the work of these later poets sponsors postmodern readings not only for its frequent questioning and undermining of national literary traditions and formal poetics, but also for its range of reference. Muldoon and Carson especially are trickster-poets notorious for their expansive and elaborate juxtapositions of high, low, and middlebrow cultural referents and media, their explorations of the effects of drugs and drink on the creative mind, and performances of dazzling linguistic sleights-of-hand that subvert the ideas of an organic national tradition and creative order advocated by Yeats. Rather than utter that the centre can not hold, these poets ask what the centre is, at least for the moment, who says so, and so what? They often take on these

matters in poetry that looks and reads like prose. In this respect, Joyce's recurring walk-on in *Irish Poetry and the Construction of Modern Identity* is both characteristically Joycean ("by a commodius vicus of recirculation") and a credible model for the Irish artist attempting to articulate an identity in the protean media of language.

While Joyce reappears in most chapters of this study to offer evidence for Smith's arguments, Seamus Heaney's work provides its heart. Smith includes two essays on this influential poet who seems to serve as a waywatcher between Yeatsian modernism and postmodern poetics. Indeed, Heaney's lifelong preoccupation with the state of being in between, as an artist and an individual, provides a potent metaphor for Smith's concluding argument. In Heaney's poetry and criticism, Smith identifies both the resources and a sensibility that underscore his interest in describing the notion of an Ireland between fantasy and history as a core concern and place of writing for modern Irish poets. Heaney's work both maps a tradition of modern Irish poetry, as well as revises this survey to reveal new ways to locate the shifting crossroads of Irish poetry and identity. Heaney's poetry, with its ongoing preoccupations with balance, lines, and play, and its corresponding impulses towards upset, criss-

crossing frequencies and registers, and craft, provides a model of the ambilocated poet working "everywhere and nowhere," revisiting and misplacing themes and forms that both assert who the poet is while interfering with understandings and expectations of who the poet might be, both his own and ours.

Smith's chapters on Heaney are the strongest in the book. They prove that Smith is most compelling when he writes specifically about the poems and criticism that provide evidence for his argument. In this regard, his chapters on Devlin, Heaney and Carson are particularly insightful, while Chapter Three, "Living to Tell the Tale: Fallon, Clarke, MacGreevy, Coffey" is a tour-de-force and a major contribution to the existing criticism of these sometimes neglected authors. More than once, Smith makes compelling connections between the poems under discussion and the work of Auden and Wallace Stevens, connections which suggest further avenues of critical inquiry. Smith is also well-versed in critical theory, but his use of Baudrillard and Derrida seems unnecessary in light of his skillful readings of primary resources. Finally, Smith's close-readings are rigorous and revelatory and move the reader as great criticism should; back to the poems themselves.

---

**Daniela Caselli, *Beckett's Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism*.**  
Manchester University Press, 2005. 240 pp.

Onno Kusters (*Utrecht, Netherlands*)

---

In the chapter on intertextuality in his both insightful and highly readable *The Art of Fiction*, David Lodge writes: "Intertextuality [...] is entwined in the roots of the English novel, while at the other end of the chronological spectrum novelists have tended to exploit rather than resist it, freely recycling old myths and earlier works of literature to shape, or add resonance to, their presentation of contemporary life" (Penguin 1992, 99). This observation, in all its straightforwardness, touches on the complexities involved in the notion of intertextuality. What does it mean to "resist" or "exploit" intertextuality; to what extent are either or both part of the same hidden agenda, of which, moreover, the author himself may be unaware?

In the case of Samuel Beckett, critics have generally acknowledged Dante Alighieri's presence in his works, as well as the relevance of "the divine Florentine" (*Rough for Radio*) as a private source of consolation and contemplation. It is entirely fitting, therefore, that the recent *Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett* (2004) dedicates a long entry to

Dante himself as well as several separate entries to Dante-related items (curiously, though, while including one on 'Purgatory' a separate gloss on 'Hell' is lacking). The Dante entries in the *Grove Companion* identify many of Beckett's references to and reworkings of Dante, suggesting the width as well as the complexity of the intertextual network by which Beckett, resisting it, exploiting him, has dragged or, alternatively, released Dante into his own work.

The details of the Dante entries in the *Grove Companion* are provided by Chris Ackerly and by the critic whose recent monograph is being discussed here, Daniela Caselli, who is *the* expert on Dante's role in the Beckett canon. Caselli's *Beckett's Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism* largely steers clear of "[t]he danger [...] in the neatness of identifications," to quote the punter himself ('Dante...Bruno. Vico...Joyce', 3), of Dante in Beckett and will thus, I suggest, for years to come remain a crucial source for Beckett scholars (or Dante scholars, for that matter) in their search for Dante in



the work of 'the lapsed Dubliner.'

A full, systematic and largely chronological foray into the Dantean intertext in Beckett, Caselli's book first discusses Beckett's late 1920s/early 1930s 'detection' of Dante in Joyce and his "recycling" of Dante in *Proust*. Usefully, Caselli pays a great deal of attention to the way in which Beckett in 'Dante...Bruno. Vico...Joyce' juxtaposes Dante's linguistic study *De vulgare eloquentia* and Joyce's 'Work in Progress', clarifying differences and similarities between both authors' ambitious linguistic experiments (chapter 1). Subsequently, Caselli investigates purgatorial characters Belacqua and Sordello's roles in Beckett's posthumously published 1930s novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (chapter 2). Surely the most (in)famous character from the *Comedy* to be revived in Beckett's work is Belacqua Shuah. Belacqua, the notorious, lazy lute maker from 'Purgatory' IV, where he represents a mixture of self-pity, penny wisdom and the recognition of the vanity of human endeavour (we do well to remember that Beckett's Trinity spoof of Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* was simply called *Human Wishes*), is the protagonist of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. But also in a great deal of his subsequent short stories ('Dante and the Lobster', 'Sedendo et Quiesciendo', 'Echo's Bones'), novels (*Murphy*, *Watt*), novellas (*How It Is*, *Company*), dramas (*Waiting for Godot*), and dramaticules (*All Strange Away*), to mention only a few examples, Beckett gave Belacqua a position as a presence, reference, or prototype.

The short stories of *More Pricks Than Kicks*, which Caselli defines as "a significant case study for understanding how intratextuality – that is to say the relationship between different texts by the same author – operates in Beckett" (57) are the subject matter of chapter 3; in chapter 4 Caselli discusses the novels *Murphy* and *Watt*, in the case of *Murphy* highlighting the role of the manuscripts in commenting on the (role of) intertextuality in the novel, and in the case of *Watt* concentrating on the paradoxical nature of the 'Addenda' section – do they or don't they 'belong' to the novel as such? The question and sources of 'authority' in *Mercier and Camier* are tackled in chapter 5; Dante's function as part of the "oscillation between memory and invention" (120) in the texts from the *Novellas to Texts for Nothing* and *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable* is discussed in chapter 6; the infernal qualities of *How It Is* are investigated in chapter 7; and chapter 8 analyses *The Lost Ones*, which, Caselli argues, "plays with the notions of transparency and opacity, inside and outside, and

perception and construction, in order to critique them as oppositions" (183) and "creates not only a visible invisibility but also an invisible visibility" (185), concluding that "[t]he words of the poet' are simultaneously Dante's and Beckett's words; they are the repeatability that makes language, the authority that constitutes the text, the outside which is also the inside" (196).

Frankly, I am not always sure what to make of Caselli's profoundly paradoxical findings concerning Beckett's profound paradoxes. Although her work does open up the Dante connection in Beckett's work in ways that I had not expected, identifying sources and echoes of which I was blissfully ignorant, and unequivocally rendering a great service to Beckett scholars, it seems too often to prefer obfuscation over clarity. Let me try to pinpoint this issue with a number of examples.

Caselli's work, as was to be expected, does far more than neatly identify Dante in Beckett; hers comprises a theoretically informed approach that opens up not just the whats and wheres of Dante in Beckett, but also the hows, whys and wherefores, not only of Dante's presence, or explicit absence in Beckett, but of the notion of intertextuality as such. As Caselli herself puts it:

Many critics have isolated fragments of Dante's texts in Beckett's *oeuvre*. These are then often called quotations, sources, origin, and their function is explicated in terms of these labels. Other scholars have conducted thematic studies, often placing Beckett within a tradition or a context to which Dante is also argued to belong. These comparative researchers call Beckett texts 'purgatorial' and 'internal' [= 'infernal', OK], read such Beckettian infernos (or purgatories) as examples of the human condition, or describe Beckett's anti-theological use of Dante as parodic and subverse. [...] By contrast, I am interested in what it means to claim that an intertextual element comes from Dante, both in terms of the project of intertextuality and in terms of the explication of Beckett's texts in their own right. To look at what can be labeled as 'Dante' in Beckett leads us to consider the different kinds of intertextuality present in the Beckett *oeuvre*, and also how that same *oeuvre* can help us to reshape our ideas about literary intertextuality. (2)

Caselli throws her net wide, and in doing so, while as a whole offering an invaluable work in the Beckett studies canon, some of her contentions and theoretical premises, to my mind, unfortunately suffer from losing sight of the 'original' quality of Beckett's texts, or seek recourse to unwarranted arguments. Some of Caselli's theoretical formulations fail to disengage themselves from their rhetorical neatness and actually prove a prove a point.. "Beckett in this

study is assumed to be not the author of the texts but a figure of power emerging from them, which inevitably remains powerful even when professing its own powerlessness" (3), to quote a case in point: Beckett may be "a figure of power emerging from" his texts, whatever that means, but he is also *the author*, even if Caselli's study assumes otherwise. Samuel Barclay Beckett, 1906-1989 (the author is dead, but only in a very real sense), cannot be abstracted into a mere puppet, even if he is suggested, like the puppet in *Dead of Night*, to turn on his own master.

Furthermore, I object to the artificial construction of Beckett's Notebooks as primary texts which are argued to have the same 'authority' as the published writings. "By adopting an intra- and intertextual perspective in analysing the relationship between the 'Whoroscope' notebook and *Murphy*, I do not presuppose a hierarchy between the two texts. *Murphy* is regarded neither as the finished product capable of giving meaning to a fragmentary source nor as a surface of which the manuscript is a deeper layer. [...] I am interested in how *Murphy* constructs the notebook and how the notebook constructs *Murphy*" (84). Arguing that the two texts implicate each other in different ways ("I read them as two texts that, in different ways, keep promising a presence while stating an absence", *ibid.*), Caselli devotes a number of pages as to how and why this might be the case:

If *Murphy*'s obscurity cannot be explained by a manuscript that is even more obscure, that same obscurity has to be read as seductive, because it can promise not only the invisible Dante but, by analogy, even the invisible 'uses of depth psychology'. This reading of the unpublished material struggles to stabilise the manuscript as the place where the full sense of Beckett's texts can be recuperated. But the same denial of fullness is mirrored, rather than solved, in the unpublished material, which disappoints the wish for the end of interpretation. (86)

As acknowledged by Caselli, the depth-psychological approach of Beckett was postulated by J.D. O'Hara, who describes Beckett's self-addressed warning in the Notebook to "keep the whole Dantesque analogy out of sight" as "a warning that he may have expanded to cover his later uses of depth psychology" (O'Hara, *Samuel Beckett's Hidden Drives: Structural Uses of Depth Psychology*, UP of Florida, 1997, 44). However, I am not sure that O'Hara's aim is to "stabilise" anything; quite apart from that, I find it hard to see Caselli's point, if it is, indeed, a point: O'Hara's perhaps debatable contention that Beckett's warning may serve to cover his later uses of depth psychology

does not imply that in the manuscripts "the full sense of Beckett's texts can be recuperated." After all, the cover-up operation may have started as early as the Notebooks themselves. And as far as the final sentence of the quotation is concerned – "But the same denial of fullness is mirrored, rather than solved, in the unpublished material, which disappoints the wish for the end of interpretation" – is concerned, I simply do not follow.

Further to this, Caselli concludes that Beckett's Dante-obliterating note "can be read as an indication of the way in which the first fifteen sections work, namely as promise. The cancellation of Dante gives presence to its invisibility, and projects it outside the text. The cancellation is not cancelled, and promises an invisible presence: these notes evoke an absent (future) text structured around Dante's invisible authority" (83). This observation, apart from being hard to follow, is simplifying things. The notebook entry refers only to Murphy's (and Neary's, perhaps) 'careers' from which the Dantesque analogy should be kept out of sight; the note does not tell us that in *Murphy* as a whole there are no Dantesque analogies where none are intended. Furthermore: Dante, even Belacqua himself *is* present in *Murphy*. Surely Beckett had something in mind similar to Joyce's use of the Homeric background in *Ulysses*, many details of which, under instructions of the author, were to be kept out of sight too (not least, and still kept out of sight by scrupulous publishers, the episode titles, by which, paradoxically, most readers now refer to them).

Fortunately, even while suggesting that in the notebook "Dante's absence is projected outside the manuscript" and that therefore to "think of Dante as a circulating presence [...] a circulating *auctoritas* in Beckett's *oeuvre* means to analyse how its invisible authority is at once constructed and displaced by the promise of the manuscript" (87), and subsequently postulating that "[i]t is possible to speak of Dante in relation to *Murphy* because the text points to an authority while deferring the promise of its presence" (*ibid.*), Caselli also includes a relevant, thoroughly enjoyable and highly insightful analysis of Dante in *Murphy*. Her demonstration, for instance, of how Belacqua's state is one "to which Murphy aspires" (*ibid.*) is quite convincing.

Similarly, Caselli's insightful reading of the *Watt* Addenda as "part of the potentially infinite reduplication of themes and narrative structures which construct the novel [...], a *mise en abyme* of the same structures that constitute the rest of the text" (90) becomes part of an overly complicated

effort to reduce (or expand, I'm not sure) the Addenda to a part of *Watt* that "self-revealingly deconstructs itself as a secondary language, defying a linear reading" (ibid.). Indeed, while reading Caselli's book the question dawned on me as to why, when Beckett's texts in their own right offer so many challenges and intricacies to be tackled by common sense and a profound knowledge of Beckett and his reading, Caselli obfuscates matters the way she so often does.

Caselli, I sometimes feel, for whatever reasons uses

theory for the sake of using theory and not because it actually helps her to prove her points, most of which are lucid and relevant. Her Foucauldian approach, like many theoretical approaches, does not in itself here help to provide a new insight into Beckett's Dante. Caselli's close readings, however, do, because she does provide a thoroughly stimulating and refreshing reading of Beckett's Dante. Though problematic in its theoretical premises and elaboration, *Beckett's Dante* also provides many well-seen, well-said details.

---

**Cheryl Alexander Malcolm, *Unshtetling Narratives: Depictions of Jewish Identities in British and American Film and Literature*, Salzburg: Poetry Salzburg 2006, 214 pp.**

*Sue Vice (Sheffield, UK)*

---

It is very fitting that Cheryl Alexander Malcolm's latest critical work should be published by Poetry Salzburg, in their new series Salzburg Anglophone Critical Studies. This publisher – also home to Raymond Federman and Michael Hamburger – encourages the mixing of genres and national languages, which is appropriate both to Malcolm's critical approach and to her background as an American in Poland.

The term 'unshtetling' in the title of Malcolm's study of British and American representations of Jews punningly presents her argument in a nutshell. Not only are the filmic and fictional texts which Malcolm analyses subversive – or subverted – but they represent Jewish identities which no longer depend on the Eastern European village of the shtetl, as either a geographical or intellectual homeland. The cover illustration of *Unshtetling Narratives* shows two 'klezmer Jews', as the Yiddish caption has it, of the emphatically 'shtetled' kind, dressed in old-fashioned Hasidic garb. In Malcolm's study, we read about a very different kind of Jewish subject, ranging from the upper-class Briton Harold Abrahams in Hugh Hudson's 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*, to cocaine addict Harry Towns in Bruce Jay Friedman's short story entitled 'Lady'. Several of the works Malcolm analyses actually reproduce at the level of plot the exodus from the shtetl, or its equivalent. She gives a very apt and detailed reading of Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl* in these terms, pointing out that critical views of Ozick's novella tend to focus exclusively on its protagonist Rosa Lublin's Holocaust memories, rather than on those parts of the story which concern her 'Edenic' life in Warsaw before the war, and her life in the USA after the war. In Miami Rosa meets Simon Persky, who was, like her, born in Poland but left before the war.

Ironically, it is Persky, the long-time Miami resident, who represents the life of the shtetl, while Rosa Lublin, the more recent arrival, embodies sophisticated assimilation. While Persky reads a Yiddish newspaper, Rosa prefers Polish. This is the meaning of her resonant remark to Persky: "My Warsaw wasn't your Warsaw". Malcolm argues that Lublin's preference for pre-war Warsaw over post-war America is 'alarmingly devoid of history', and based on a view of American cities as ahistorical. Malcolm even reads the death in a wartime camp of Rosa's daughter Magda in terms of Rosa's obstinate devotion to the apparent success of assimilation, since Magda – as her name suggests – is blonde and Aryan-looking. Yet Magda is lost while Rosa survives.

Malcolm also re-reads Anita Brookner's novel *The Latecomers* in the terms suggested by the paradigm of 'unshtetling'. As with *The Shawl*, this is not the way in which this text is usually approached, but it makes a cogent and fascinating alternative. As Malcolm argues, without the Holocaust background to the lives of the two main characters, who both arrived in Britain before the war on Kindertransport trains, *The Latecomers* would be simply a comedy of manners in terms of Thomas Hartmann and Thomas Fibich's complementary eccentricities. Even the title of Brookner's novel partakes of this duality: it signifies old age and the belated understanding that age may bring, but also has a Holocaust-related meaning. 'Latecomers' are, as Malcolm argues, distinct from 'survivors'. They missed the historical trauma that engulfed their families by evading it, and Malcolm analyses with sensitivity Fibich's repeated assertion that, 'I should have gone back ... I should not have left. I should have got off the train', in terms both of its psychic meaning —

practically, such a course of action would not have been open to a young child — and its discourse. While Fibich's 'three short statements' may resemble the language of a child or a 'school primer', such stylization amounts to an illusion since the 'message is distinctly that of an adult not a child'. In this remark, Malcolm's commentary goes to the heart of the paradox of texts which represent the memories or the past of child survivors of the Holocaust. It may appear that their voices are directly represented, but the necessarily adult nature of any such utterance is, rather, a sign that the past is irrecoverable and that fictive strategies are inevitable.

Throughout this study, Malcolm reads her eclectic and well-chosen texts against the grain. She offers a new view of René Gallimard, the protagonist of David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*, as one in the great Jewish tradition of schlemiels — who range from to Bernard Malamud's Morris Bober in *The Assistant* to Woody Allen's film personae. The sexual error Gallimard makes in mistaking the male Song Liling for a woman makes him a schlemiel *par excellence*, as an extension of that figure's customary sexual ineptness. Elsewhere, Malcolm ingeniously compares two narratives of ethnic 'passing' to demonstrate her

argument about the new Jewish identity. These are Langston Hughes's 'Passing' and Bernard Malamud's 'The Lady of the Lake'. While Jack, the protagonist of 'Passing', is in danger from his descendents — if his children look inexplicably black, he plans to declare them illegitimate — Henry Levin in 'The Lady of the Lake' lives at the risk of sexual exposure due to his circumcised state. As Malcolm points out, Levin's choice of name in his quest to pass for gentile is ironic. In the guise of Henry R. Freeman, the freedom he feels in having apparently shaken off his Jewish roots is evident, but at the same time the sound of the new surname continues to suggest the very identity Levin wishes to cover up.

Throughout *Unshtetling Narratives*, Cheryl Malcolm shows an unerring eye for detail, both in terms of critical estimate and close textual reading, and strikes out from other studies of Jewish literary identity by including British-Jewish texts in her study. This book shows that it is not just fictional films and prose of which one may say, as Malcolm does, that, 'Jewish history may be a road novel, but, this time, Jews are doing the driving'. Something similar is true of approaches like Malcolm's to Jewish texts — there is a new critical force at the wheel.

---

***Fiction and Literary Prizes in Great Britain*, edited by Wolfgang Görtschacher and Holger Klein, in association with Claire Squires. Vienna: Praesens Verlag, 2006. 169 pp.**

*Mine Özyurt Kılıç (Bilkent, Turkey)*

---

If not the first book of its kind, with its fine range of informative and argumentative essays, *Fiction and Literary Prizes in Great Britain* is a versatile and useful collection that provides enjoyable reading. This book is not so much a survey investigating the criteria for choosing the best among a pool of widely-acclaimed books, as a dossier including ideas of critics, scholars, readers and, perhaps most importantly, ideas of writers. The variety of the essays in this collection is a reflection of the fact that there are numerous literary prizes, each targeting a different group of writers. As Wolfgang Görtschacher puts in his introductory article, "There are prizes for anything, almost for everything."

The book consists of nine thought-provoking essays, eight of which were originally presented at the "Culture and the Literary Prizes" conference held by Oxford Brookes University in October 2003. Half of these essays are devoted to the Booker Prize, and two of these are by Sharon Norris who deserves the space she is given not only because of her fine PhD on the Booker Prize itself but also as a writer and a journalist with a good knowledge of the world of

publishing. In her first essay "Recontextualising the Booker", Norris surveys the development of the prize from its 1964 roots in the meeting of the Society of Young Publishers, analyses the changes in jury's tendencies since the first Booker Prize which was awarded in 1969 and concludes that prizes "have the potential to be both the instruments, and the victims, of globalisation." In her second essay "Scots and the Booker," Norris problematises the "under-representation" of Scottish fiction on the Booker short-list, thus inevitably touching upon the "increasingly complex issue of writers and national identity."

This collection also presents Richard Todd's survey entitled: "How Has the Booker Prize Changed Since 1996?" Having studied the earlier changes in his *Consuming Fictions: The Booker Prize and Fiction in Britain Today* (1996), Todd here traces the "more significant changes that have taken place since 1996, both in and around the culture of the Booker Prize." After trying to understand the general mindset that determines "the best", Todd considers the eligibility rules for the Booker. He anticipates



that with the inclusion of not only American fiction but also of world fiction in translation announced in 2004, the international history of the Booker will grow increasingly informative in this respect.

Milada Franková's "The (Booker) Prize for Fiction and the Tenor of the Times" draws attention to the role of the Booker in shaping the cultural environment. Franková, who lectures in contemporary fiction outside Britain, thinks that the prize is a "guide" to tell what is going on in Britain; thus, she deems the Booker Prize a "reliable and sensitive barometer of the times."

Iona Vagner contributes an original essay on the career of Booker prize winner Rose Tremain. Vagner first seeks the influence of the UEA creative writing course on Tremain's success and then asserts that Tremain "seems to have discovered the perfect recipe for writing award-winning literature." Judging from Tremain's career, Vagner claims that prizes play an influential role in writers' performance. Vagner also contributes to the collection with a bibliography listing all the works on literary prizes, starting from Horace Walker's 1926 guidebook "How to Win Cash Prizes: An Authentic Guide to Literary Contests" to rather more recent articles that discuss the issue in terms of gender, race, nation, and identity.

Gail Chester's essay traces the history of the Hawthornden Prize which was founded in Britain in 1919. Through presenting the correspondence between J.C. Squire, the founder, and Sir Edward Marsh, the judge, Chester shows the "unchanging mechanics of awarding prizes." Another essay on a literary prize other than the Booker is by Wendy Pollard. Her essay is about the French literary prize "The Prix Fémina-Vie Heureuse Anglais" which has an all-female jury formed in reaction to the all-male jury of the "Prix Goncourt" whose first prize to a woman writer could come forty years after the

establishment of the award. That "The Prix Fémina-Vie Heureuse Anglais" led to similar awards offered to writers of different nations such as the Northcliffe Prize, Prix Fémina-Vie Heureuse Allemand and Prix Fémina Étranger makes Pollard conclude that literary prizes can make a contribution to international understanding. Sandra Ponzanesi's essay with its post-colonial focus also has an important discussion about award-winning post-colonial writers and the related issue of merchandising of post-colonial literature starting with Rushdie's reception of the Booker Prize in 1980. Ponzanesi equates literary awards with "the economy of prestige", and she sees Arundati Roy's "commercial and unprecedented success" with *The God of Small Things* (1997) as a "symptom of this phenomenon." To make her criticism more topical, she also mentions the eagerness of the film industry for taking its share from such successful events.

Nina Branco's essay on the momentum speeches given by writers shifts the focus from the readers of award-winning books to their writers. Branco goes to the philosophical roots of the concept of "literary prizes" and marks the sense of oneness that singling a writer out of "the international republic of letters" creates.

At a time when there are numerous journals to review books and measure them against each other, when there are MA programmes devoted to publishing, and above all, when there are many prizes put to award writers, *Fiction and Literary Prizes in Great Britain* is a must for those brave enough to investigate whether literary prizes simply call the names of citizens of the international republic of letters, or whether there is more to it. The writers here are all expert researchers and make this book a significant contribution to the field.