

BOOK REVIEWS

Robert Burden and Stephan Kohl, eds. *Landscape and Englishness*
Spatial Practices: An Interdisciplinary Series in Cultural History, Geography, Literature 1
Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006. ISBN 90-420-2102-0. 266 pp.

Jopi Nyman (Joensuu, Finland)

The aim of this new Rodopi series is to contribute to the study of cultural meanings embedded in places and spaces, with particular reference to the maintenance and deconstruction of national and regional myths. To achieve this goal, *Landscape and Englishness*, the first volume in the series, seeks to provide interdisciplinary perspectives on the relationship between the two in order to construct “a new interdisciplinary cultural history,” as suggested by Robert Burden in his Introduction. What the individual case analyses in the volume reveal is a multi-faceted understanding of the nationed use(s) of rural landscape in a variety of cultural texts, ranging from Cobbett and Froude to interwar travel writing and contemporary photography. This timely volume enhances our understanding of the construction of Englishness as an idealized and invented form of national identity. The roots of the volume are in the ESSE Zaragoza Conference of 2004.

Organized into four sections (Theory; 19th Century and Before; 20th Century; Contemporary), the volume seeks to understand landscape historically and in an interdisciplinary manner. Yet it is this notion of interdisciplinarity emphasised in the description of the project that is both the strength and weakness of the volume. For example, while most of the essays in the volume draw from the vocabularies of contemporary social and cultural theory (e.g., Foucault, Lefebvre), the two essays, by Chris Thurgar-Davis and Christoph Schubert, in the “Theory” section centre upon questions of metaphor, cognitive linguistics and spatial semantics. While showing expertise in their respective fields, these rather formalist essays resonate very little with the rest of the book and its explicit attention to historical and cultural issues, discourses and ideologies.

The other sections of the book tackle a variety of canonical and non-canonical texts and genres and present a number of interesting issues about the role of the landscape in the making of national identity. The second section consists of four essays. It opens with Ralph Pordzik’s noteworthy recontextualisation of William Cobbett’s *Rural Rides* in the

period’s debates about modernisation and emerging tourism. The rest of the essays deal with such topics as the changing questioning of identity in the English novel (Patrick Parrinder), the ambiguous role of the sea in British imperial discourse (Bernhard Klein), and the symbolic role of Stonehenge as sacred geography in British fiction from Frances Burney to Peter Ackroyd (Silvia Mergenthal).

The third section consists of two essays on canonical writers and two on different aspects of travel writing. Robert Burden’s essay on D.H. Lawrence’s is a contribution to the recent re-evaluation of his travel writing and shows its links with colonial discourse. Christine Berberich examines the role of nostalgia in English narratives of the countryside, linking the persistent use of the trope in popular and literary texts with myths of hope and harmony: whereas Orwell and Sassoon are examples of an elegiac attitude towards the rural, the works of Julian Barnes and Kazuo Ishiguro do no longer showcase the countryside but warn against its commodification and the dangers of the heritage industry. The two essays on travel writing between the wars, by Ben Knights and Stephan Kohl, explore the ideologies embedded in these mapping-of-England narratives. Both authors present interesting materials (Kohl reads 1930s motoring guidebooks, and Knights writes on H.V. Morton and J.B. Priestley) and speculations about the role that such texts played. While Knights links his travellers’ narratives with Urry’s notion of the romantic gaze, discourses of degeneration and utopianism, Kohl argues that the rural England explored by motorists links their modernity with the nation’s history – the landscape is invented for contemporary use or uses as a site for experiencing the nation and its allegedly authentic and shared character.

The final two essays bring the book up to the 21st century. In her analysis of Martin Parr’s photographs of the English beach, Merle Tönnies claims that Parr’s representations of the seaside resist dominant touristic and commercial images of the beach, and aim at producing an ironic understanding of the past forms of Englishness. In a similar vein, Ruth Helyer examines

the alternatives of Englishness and English spaces in the works of Salman Rushdie and Zadie Smith, where Englishness may be stripped of its place-relatedness and performed in India and Bangladesh. Reading such mutations of national and cultural identity through the tropes of doubles and twins, Helyer suggests that “the looker and the looked-at” may not be easy

to separate from each other.

In sum, the volume manages to show convincingly that the construction of national identity is intricately linked with place, space and myths organizing them. It can be recommended to anybody working with the narrative construction of modern Englishness.

Michèle Lurdos & Judith Misrahi-Barak, eds. *Transport(s) in the British Empire and the Commonwealth*. Les Carnets du Cerpac. no. 4, Montpellier: Publications de l'Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier III, 2007.

Anne Holden Rønning (Bergen, Norway)

The word ‘transport’ has a variety of meanings and the editors have chosen to interpret this in its widest sense, and, by adding an ‘s’, open “a few more avenues” as they state in the introduction. This provides an interesting mix of topics – the picaresque, the slave memoir, the history of railways, the role of the travel writer as a voyeur, the forced transportation of people from one place to another, as well as the emotional state of being carried away by joy. However, at times the interpretation of the word is stretched a little too far, as in some of the articles in the final section: Crossing Borders. The book would have benefited by being reduced. At five hundred pages the complexity of the nature of the word ‘transport’ becomes too evident, and a shorter and more strictly focused version would have been preferable. This book is a collection of essays from a conference held in Montpellier in November 2005 on transport in the British Empire and Commonwealth. Neither is the division of the book into four sections always positive, as the essays in some of the sections are too disparate. In this review I shall therefore not stick to the division of the editors, but group the essays somewhat differently.

In his keynote address Wolfgang Binder poses the question as to whether ‘transport’ is not one of the fundamental features of transculturation. The movement from one culture to another inevitably leads to a transfer of culture both ways. He illustrates this with drawings and detailed comment on two Caribbean narratives *Lady Nugent’s Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805* and Matthew Lewis’s *Journal of a West India Proprietor Kept During a Residence in the Island of Jamaica* (1834). This sets the pattern for about half of the articles, which deal with literature.

The most common meaning of the word ‘transport’ is, of course, as a means of moving from one place to another. Several of the essays here open up for

interesting comments on the role of the railway, for example, whether from a political history point of view as in Bruce Smith’s description of the construction of the New Zealand railways and the political issues involved, which he terms “political football.” The struggle between the unions and the politicians for power and control was key to the way the railways developed in New Zealand. This essay would have been enriched by a few more details or a map of where the railways ran for those unfamiliar with the New Zealand scene. The role of the immigrants in building the railways is also not mentioned, especially when we think of the Foxton line in the North Island, and the Greymouth line in the South.

The contrast between the Irish railway system and that of Australia, as discussed by Stephen Little and Julian Hine, and their differing gauges is a salient comment on colonialism and the power it had to influence even technological matters. The role of railways in the creation of national identity as well as in opening up a country is reflected clearly in the size of the two countries. Whereas the car is a satisfactory means of transport for shorter distances in Ireland, in Australia the railway is less superfluous. However, again the number of days needed to cross Australia, and both distance and time would have been useful and appropriate to include.

But the railway is more than a means of transport; it is a meeting of peoples. As such it is used as a leitmotif in literature, whether as symbolic of national identity or as a kind of hell. Louise Harrington’s essay “‘The Train Nation’: The Railway as Leitmotif in South Asian Literature” takes up the railway as a reflection of an imagined nation and of national identity. With a starting point in Gandhi’s attack on the railways because “[t]hey accentuate the evil nature of man” (although he did use them extensively in his campaigns), she refers to literature from India that underscores the

construct of nation. Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), and Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (1995) all in some way or other express the social and cultural, even political, effects of the railways in India. She also presents an interesting view on the role of the railway as a symbol of freedom and yet entrapment, and even as a way to die.

But railways also run underground, and, like Orpheus, we descend to an underworld in several senses. John McLeod's portrayal of the consequences of post-war II migrants' work on the underground figures the city's betrayal of illusions for those from abroad. "Orphia in the Underground: Postcolonial London Transport" describes the London underground as "a way of rewriting London in the light of diasporic experience and possibility" (392), particularly as a kind of Hades in the writings of Lord Kitchener, Hanif Kureishi and Salman Rushdie. With its comments on and links to the London bombings this essay brings us into the present, and discusses how the literature of the underground survives as an expression of subversion and creativity that continues to engage writers imaginatively. To put it under the section Crossing Borders, in my opinion, seems somewhat out of place since, although the migrants have literally crossed borders, McLeod's point is the creation of a new underground world.

Since a train combines escape and enclosure, especially in the ladies compartment, stories narrated during a railway journey are used, suggests Evelyne Hanquart-Turner, in 'The Kanyakumari Tales' to reveal male-female relationships in a manner not unlike that of Chaucer and Boccaccio. Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupé* is about the condition of women in the late 20th century. Whether a woman can live alone is the key question, which the tales will answer. Using a train coupé is advantageous as it brings together different age groups and classes which all help Akhila to determine her future life and answer the question. A general comment on the intimacy of train journeys would have added a further dimension to this essay.

An article on South African minibus taxis by Barbara Helly "AZIKWELWA! (We will not Ride!)" gives a highly critical comment on the historical and political reasons for the minibus taxi system, and shows the effects on the black population of the proposed introduction of capitalist and business criteria. This is a very apt and timely discussion that deserves more prominence.

Other articles take up other consequences of travelling. Lloyd Johnson discusses in "Transport-

ation and Travelling the Southern Backcountry: St. David's Parish, South Carolina in Eighteenth Century British America" how travel and trade contributed to development in this area of the US by linking the backcountry to Charleston merchants and the outside world. The practical difficulties of travelling in India in 1820s are described in Florence D'souza's "The Transports of James Tod in Rajasthan." And Nelly Gillet's analysis of "Patricia Ledyard's 'Ferry Tales': Transports around the Tongan Islands" takes up the parallel between voyages on boats which can be "compared to contemplative pauses in life" (278). Through the relation of her own life and tales of others' lives in the Polynesian islands, the ferry becomes symbolic of a threshold to a new life (279), a rite-of-passage, a place of re-birth.

Since the book deals with the British Empire and the Commonwealth, the *forced transport* of conquered or occupied peoples is a salient topic. Benaouda Lebdaï's essay on the early slave narrative of Olaudah Equiano relates the fascinating tale of a slave who not only comments on conditions for those taken into slavery (he was only a child) but also parallels this with a search for spirituality after he becomes a free man. Unlike many slaves, he worked on a ship and crossed the Atlantic many times in addition to visiting other places. The author underlines this, but the essay lacks a critical stance. Patricia Krus's essay on rewritings of the Middle Passage as seen in George Lamming's *Natives of my Person* and Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* demonstrates a fine contrast between texts that deal with very contemporary issues of retracing the middle passage, violence, and the effects of the original slave journeys. Both these writers engage with the dissension in Caribbean society, and as such. Krus suggests, demonstrate the failure of the discourse of colonial power. Olivette Otele provides an alternative picture of the transatlantic slave trade. She tells the story of the seamen lured to serve on slave ships from Bristol, either in order to pay off pub debts or through press-ganging. These sailors were in many ways treated not much better than the slaves by the Merchant Venturers. Their stories, which tell of abuse and the suffering of a forgotten group, have been largely ignored.

But it was not only in the Caribbean that people were forcibly transported. Australia's treatment of the Aborigines and the unwillingness to acknowledge historical fact is the focus of Susan Barrett's article. To illustrate this she discusses the journals of George Augustus Robinson in Robert Drewe's *The Savage Crows* (1976), Mudrooroo's *Doctor Woodreddy's Prescription for Enduring the*

Ending of the World (1983) and Matthew Kneale's *English Passengers* (2000). Transport here is understood as both physical and cultural, transporting the reader back in time, as well as emotional transport in the way the text affects the reader. Barrett posits that Drewe invites readers to share in the protagonist's guilt about what happened to the Tasmanian Aborigines, and thus feel guilty themselves. By contrast her critique of Mudrooroo's text takes up many salient points such as for Aborigines the alien concept of writing history, and the issue of language, of writing in English, which she also comments on Kneale's novel. This most interesting topic is however, never really discussed.

Colonial treatment of the 'other' was also the case in the twentieth century as is evident in the narratives about the forced evacuation and internment of Japanese-Canadians during the Second World War. The reactions of the groups ranged from quiet to angry protest, since those born in Canada and those who immigrated responded differently to the forced imprisonment after Pearl Harbour. Teresa Gibert examines these as examples of travel writing, but we can ask whether travel to an internment or relocation camp really is travelling. Admittedly a train journey, but the narratives are more concerned with the personal reaction to relocation than the journey itself. Like Lebdai, Krus and Barrett, Gibert is really writing about a transportation experience. This is one example where the editors have stretched the meaning of transport, so it becomes ambiguous.

Others were transported voluntarily, like the Indian women who came to the Caribbean in ships and about whom Rita Christian writes. These women were not necessarily abducted, but were in search of a new life of independence for themselves – a conscious choice made by, among others, widows. Indentured positions in the Caribbean offered them a chance of freedom from caste and class, and the opportunity to create a space for themselves, even a matriarchal one in some cases. Christian writes of the construction of a new identity as well as the establishment of a collective amnesia common in such groups, as also described in some of V. S. Naipaul's work.

Another contributor who takes up travel in Naipaul's work is Florence Labaune-Demeule with her article subtitled "The symbolic meaning of transport in V. S. Naipaul's later fiction", where she examines interrelated topics ranging from the bus in *A House for Mr Biswas* to writing as the artist's journey through life. *The Enigma of Arrival*, with its actual journeys as well as its mental ones, is an excellent choice for this discussion, since plane

travel illustrates cultural gaps between that left behind and the destination. In a symbolic approach travelling becomes a metaphor for life. Ships, too, evolve thoughts about one's presence in the universe and one's identity in the boundless ocean, but are also "the epitome of transience" (371).

One little known form for border crossing is the underground railroad along which many American slaves fled to freedom in Canada between the 1830s and 1865. Using *Harriet's Daughter* Isabel Alonso-Breto discusses the role of Harriet Tubman, a runaway slave who became one of the best-known guides, through the eyes of a teenager who experiences what it means to be the child of Caribbean parents, a black girl in cold Canada. This essay is not really about travelling or transport rather an analysis of social and cultural issues for the next generation, but is characteristic of postcolonial writing illustrating second-generation phenomena.

The book concludes with a section entitled "Crossing Borders". The essays in this section deal mainly with literary texts, with several topics referring to Salman Rushdie. Matt Kimmich's "Lost and Found in Translation: Crossing Borders in the Novels of Salman Rushdie" is enlightening: Rushdie understands migration as translation – decontextualized and recontextualized. Through a detailed comment on some novels Kimmich demonstrates how in the latest US based novels Rushdie has moved away from myths as important ties, and to a view that origins are not based on roots but freedom. He quotes Rushdie as saying that "not to be a migrant is, perhaps, to be the only species of human being free of the shackles of nationalism" (339). In her essay Cécile Leonard shows the prevalence of travel westward in Rushdie's work, seeing *The Ground beneath her Feet* as a rewriting of the Orpheus myth. The plane journey becomes a rite of passage to the west and a form of transformation, of border crossing through travel symbolism to find oneself. But this finding of oneself in the latest Rushdie texts, Leonard suggest, can only take place by a final return eastwards to India, as her essay title denotes: "'To be Born again, first you have to die.'" This same notion is touched on in Guillaume Cingel's essay on the translator-narrator, and the road novel. "Travel is also a way of evading the world" (347), a notion examined in relation to Mahjoub's *Travelling with Djinn*s.

Armchair travel was common also in the eighteenth century as essays by Melissa Adams and Candace Ward inform us. Transculturation takes place in the mind of the reader. Adams discusses travels in the imagination in texts that explore "emotional travel,

or transport, through the medium of the printed text.” (422). Her examples are Addison’s *Spectator*, Mary Rowlandson’s *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* and Mary Jemison’s *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (426-7). To Adams these texts open “new avenues for exploring the various contexts for transport in the British Empire” (440). But we can also ask, is kidnapping a form for transport? Ward turns to Aphra Behn and William Earle as examples of the problematics of texts of sensibility in relation to the slave as protagonist. Again, while this is a most interesting essay, I fail to see the relevance of

this essay to ‘transport’, apart from the fact that the protagonists are slaves.

With its vast spread of topics and different approaches this book provides an overview of ways in which we can interpret the concept of transport, but that is also its weakness. Though the individual essays in themselves often throw new light on known or little-known texts, a clearer division between literary and non-literary texts would have been useful. The bibliography is incomplete and there is no index. That said, this volume of essays is a useful addition to any library in any institution of higher education.

Terry Eagleton. *How to Read a Poem*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.

Dieter Fuchs (Vienna, Austria)

Terry Eagleton’s *How to Read a Poem* is an introduction to poetry addressed to “students and general readers” (vii). One of the book’s chief purposes is to save the tradition of close reading from oblivion. As formal analysis has become strikingly marginalized in the world of contemporary academia, Eagleton attempts to weld practical literary criticism to the current vogue for more theory-based approaches to literature and culture. He does so mainly by combining the elitist school of New Criticism with the egalitarian political commitment of Marxist theory. Although Eagleton argues that both movements can be traced back to the humanist tradition of ancient Greece and Rome – to the art of rhetoric as a combination of text-based literary criticism and a context-based theory of republican political persuasion – it remains subject to doubt whether New Critics such as F. R. Leavis would have been very happy with that kind of archaeology. When Eagleton states that “Leavis’s focus on the sensuous detail of a poem reflected [...] the opposition to an industrial order which was governed [...] by abstraction and utility” (9), he as a representative of left-wing Leavisism presents the famous New Critic as a spoiled Marxist who, like Adorno, regards art as a means to compensate for the alienation of the individual in a world dominated by late-capitalist mass production. Sophistically brilliant as this logical twist may be, one must not forget the inherent irony that – in contrast to current approaches to literary and cultural representation – this kind of Marxist nostalgia preaches to the people the consolatory function of the opium of art.

As can be seen from these remarks, *How to Read a Poem* is an ‘Apology for Poetry’ that deals at least as much with critical theory as with formal analysis.

In addition to New Critical close reading and the Marxist context, the theoretical framework includes a variety of other approaches such as Russian and Prague Formalism, Structuralism, Performative Criticism, Reader Response Theory, and so on. Radically non-essentialist reading methods such as deconstruction and the Foucauldian approach to power, however, are strikingly absent from Eagleton’s book. One reason for this omission is the fact that Marxist alienation theory applied to the poetic genre only functions against a background of the myth of a unified self held together by the continuity of tradition and experience. Another cause is to be found in the ‘ethical turn’ of contemporary culture – the post-9/11 tendency to restore politically-committed criticism and to hold in check the deconstructive ‘anything goes’ of slippery speech.

Far from presenting these theoretical contexts in an isolated manner, the book applies all the aspects mentioned so far to the practical analysis of passages from poems taken from 16th-20th century literature and demonstrates the immediate relevance of critical theory for the reading process of scholarly analysis. As in his previous works, Eagleton demonstrates an ingenious ability to bridge the gap between theoretical abstraction and down-to-earth accessibility. His practical application of literary theory includes various approaches to the definition of poetry, the question of the ‘poeticity’ of poetic language, the work of conflicting semiotic systems within a poem, the structural interrelation of form and content, and the pragmatics of how poetic language “shapes up verbally” (3). What follows then is a detailed chapter on textual analysis that includes practically illustrated discussions of aspects such as “Meaning and Subjectivity,” “Tone

Mode and Pitch,” “Syntax, Grammar and Punctuation,” “Ambiguity,” “Rhythm and Metre,” “Imagery,” and so on. Before the work draws the conclusion that literary form shows the imprint of dominant ideologies of its socio-cultural context, it adds a structurally rather isolated and incoherent chapter on “Four Nature Poems.”

Should one want to try to find weaknesses within the overall scope of Eagleton’s cleverly written book, one has to mention that a bibliography, or at least a further reading list, would have been desirable in an introductory work published by one of the most renowned scholarly presses. A more severe fault may be attributed to the editorial policy of that company which seems to prefer the economy of page breaks to the “material reality” (164), or structural unity, of poetic form. As in Eagleton’s analysis of the ‘late capitalist’ fragmentation of the human self, the ‘organic unity’ of a sonnet written

by Shakespeare is broken up into two incoherent halves of seven lines on one page and seven lines on the following page as a result of the reprinting process (126-27). To disregard the structural subdivision of the poetic genre of the sonnet into an octave and a sestet, or three quatrains and a couplet, within the scope of an introduction to the study of poetry may be considered a serious editorial blunder. Marx – whose work is so relevant for *How to Read a Poem* – would have been extremely amused to find his theory of fragmentation confirmed by an Oxford-based publishing house’s misrepresentation of a text written by an author whose work is of overall importance for English and Western identity; Leavis – the guardian of ‘The Great Tradition’ of the English canon, whose belief in the unity of the artistic text is of equal importance to Eagleton’s book – probably not.

**Peter Childs, *Texts: Contemporary Cultural Texts and Critical Approaches*,
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.**

Rob Spence (Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK)

How many critical works would manage to encompass references to, amongst many others, such a diverse list of figures as Brigitte Bardot, Harold Bloom, Princess Diana, Eminem, Freud, Saddam Hussein, Michael Jackson, Jayne Mansfield, Iain Sinclair, Margaret Thatcher, Oprah Winfrey and Slavoj Žižek? The prolific Peter Childs manages to do so in this volume, where his interpretation of the word that supplies his title is (provocatively, some might say) very broad. In each of the sixteen shortish chapters, a single representative example of a particular type of text is examined. The texts are not limited to artefacts on paper, disc or celluloid, though those are all covered. Childs broadens his scope to include the discussion of buildings, the cult of celebrity, and even what he terms a “world media event,” in this case the turn of the millennium.

The method adopted by Childs is one familiar from student textbooks on critical theory – and it is worth noting here that the publisher describes this book as a student guide. Each text is considered from a particular theoretical position. Thus, the photographs of Cindy Sherman are approached via feminism, a short story by John Barthelme is illuminated by Deleuzian theory, and an Eminem lyric is juxtaposed with Sylvia Plath’s “Daddy” in a display of psychoanalytical reading. The film *The Matrix* is examined through what Childs terms “cyber-philosophy,” and the phenomenon of user-

generated websites such as Wikipedia is considered as a manifestation of globalization. Other texts considered in this eclectic volume include a speech by Margaret Thatcher, the poster for the film *Alien*, and Baudrillard’s “The Gulf War Will Not Take Place,” using approaches ranging from ecocriticism to hyperreality. The breadth of enquiry demonstrated here is indisputable. Even so, Childs is at pains to point out in his introduction that “the sixteen texts and sixteen approaches in the book could be differently aligned with one another, providing 256 permutations or potential different readings.”

The project of the book is, then, to read mainly non-literary texts through using the toolkit of contemporary critical theory. The names of Rorty, Foucault, and Barthes are frequently invoked, but Childs goes far beyond the usual suspects in a sometimes intimidating display of erudition, with some short chapters generating as many as thirty and forty footnotes. This density of scholarship, whilst obviously impressive, makes one wonder whether this volume is really suitable as the student primer the publisher’s blurb suggests it is. At one point, for example, in his examination of the Harry Potter novels, Childs writes:

Transformations of the self and the world are fundamental to a new reality of spells and potions that employs magic as the primary signifier of otherness, or re-presenting objects and people in

other guises, as in excess of the ontologies and epistemologies thought to contain them in advance.

This is knotty and complex, both in construction and content – and there’s nothing wrong with that, of course, but perhaps this kind of discourse would prove, at least initially, quite daunting to “anyone who ever wanted to know how to analyse a text,” for whom, according to the publisher, this book is “essential reading.” Having said that, there is much to admire here. Childs’s selection of texts is as bold as his definition of them, and his analyses are original and thought-provoking. The book is unrepentantly theoretical in its scope, and does not shy away from confronting some of the issues raised by the critics

of modern theory – indeed, one chapter is devoted to Alan Sokal’s hoax article.

I would suggest that the reader whose aim is to understand at a basic level something of the diversity of contemporary critical approaches might be better directed to Peter Barry’s *Beginning Theory*. This is not to belittle Childs. This book is remarkable, in many ways a tour-de-force in its demonstration of the protean nature of postmodern critical discourse. At the beginning, Childs quotes Edward Said’s assertion that “no text is ever finished,” and his book goes on to exemplify that statement. It is fitting, then, that his text ends with Baudrillard’s declaration that “it’s never the end.”

Anke Bartels and Dirk Wiemann, eds., *Global Fragments: (Dis)Orientation in the New World Order*. Amsterdam and New York, NY: Rodopi, 2007.

Eric A. Anchimbe (University of Bayreuth, Germany)

Globalisation – whatever it means to researchers in various fields – has had a tremendous impact on, and triggered redefinitions of, notions such as the nation state, identity, culture, consumption and economy. It has, through the processes generally attributed to it, produced what this volume of essays – evidenced in its title – calls global fragments and (dis)orientations. However, *fragments* makes sense in this case if we accept that “[t]he fragment can be a fragment only when the idea of a ‘whole’ is not entirely abandoned” (xi).

This collection contains 23 papers grouped into six thematic parts. The papers were presented at the ASNEL international conference on “Global Fragments: Dis-Orientations in the New World Order,” held at the University of Magdeburg in May 2003. The conference aimed at exploring the relations between globalisation and the new literatures in English, wide as this may be. The individual papers provide alternatives to “banal globalism” through studies of literary, theoretical, and filmic texts from the postcolonial world (xi). The main aim of this enterprise, the editors explain in the introduction, is to “articulate the global with the local from a perspective of immersion in the actual diversity of lifeworlds, focusing on such issues as consumption, identity politics, or modes of affiliation” (xi). This places the new literatures within the process of cultural globalisation “by which they are continuously being informed, but of which they are also, in part, themselves productive” (xi).

The first part of the book is entitled “Glocal Identities” and contains four thematically related papers, which, from a general perspective, deal with

the construction of subjectivities in the interplay of migration and localisation (xii).

The first paper in this part, Russell West-Pavlov’s “Contemporary Asian-Australian Identities: Hsu-Ming Teo’s *Love and Vertigo*,” begins with an “unashamedly auto-bio-graphical note” (3) that illustrates how the British-tinged Melbourne “with [its] strong Italian and Greek migrant touch” (3) that West-Pavlov grew up in has now changed so dramatically that for him “[h]ome has become intriguingly foreign ... transformed ... [and] increasingly less European” (3-4). Adopting the stance of the *bricoleur* in the Levi-Strauss sense of the term, and influenced by Foucault’s notion that there is no ‘outside of power’, this paper traces the process of Asianization of Anglo-Australian society in the last quarter of a century. This process, the author insists, has created “turbulences within the given patterns of Anglo identity-formation, triggering a sense of ‘uncanniness’”. Focusing on Asian-Australian versions of Australia rather than on Anglo-Australian versions, as was the case in the recent past, West-Pavlov traces the construction of Asian-Australia identities in Hsu-Ming Teo’s *Love and Vertigo*. The characters in the novel, just like many Asian-Australians, are involved in what Hsu-Ming Teo herself describes as “Challenging histories” about where they come from and where they are going to.

Anja Schwarz’s contribution entitled “Mapping (un-)Australian identities: Territorial disputes in Christos Tsiolkas’ *Loaded*,” further expands on access to, and refusal of, Australian identity to particular groups of people – immigrants. The essay

brings the “‘spatial logic’ exhibited in the [...] treatment of refugees by the Australian state into conjunction with the vital role of the spatial experiences in Christos Tsiolkas’ 1995 novel *Loaded*” (3). The author mediates between two starkly different levels of discourse: state-sanctioned political discourse, and private, subjective and fictionalised interaction, as fruitful avenues for explicating identity-related issues of inclusion and exclusion in both contemporary Australian literature and life.

Mala Pandurang’s paper, “Understanding departure: A study of selected pre-migration Indian female subjectivities” adopts Paul White’s conceptualisation of migration as “an outcome of tensions between the individual’s desires and opportunities – as a reflection of past circumstances and of expectations for the future” to evaluate the subjectivities of Indian women (in Mumbai) caught in the contemporary processes of globalisation and the electronic technological revolution. Situated within literary and cultural theory, the paper contributes to discourse on the “shifting subject-positions of migrants as a consequence of the phenomenon of geo-cultural displacement and concomitant reformulations of identity” (29). It posits that, even though it is true that potential Indian women emigrants would constantly negotiate identities within complex and shifting situations, “the degree of violence of adjustment to changes in circumstances could be dependent on the level of socialisation prior to departure” (33). This position is illustrated using data from a questionnaire administered by the author, as well as television serials, films, relatives, and the Internet.

In “Black, Asian and Other British: Transcultural literature and the discreet charm of ethnicity,” Frank Schulze-Engler takes the discussion from identity construction to ethnicity, illustrating how its many faces have been at the “heart of violent conflicts fuelled by deadly hatred” (48). The author focuses on certain influential concepts of ethnicity, the demise of political blackness in contemporary Britain, the constitutive role played by concepts of “Black British” and “Asian British” literature, and how ethnicity is negotiated in literary texts generally categorised under “Black” or “Asian” British literature. After examining the discreet charm of ethnicity especially as a springboard for the critique of modernity, the paper concludes on the note that, ethnicity, as exposed in Black and Asian British literature “contributes to the emergence of different modes of being modern in a world where modernity is

increasingly experienced in transnational and transcultural contexts” (56).

Part Two, “Consuming Globality”, deals with patterns through which global cultural flows are appropriated locally. The four papers assembled here debunk the idea of a homogeneous global consumer culture and instead illustrate the diversity and productivity of consumption (xii).

The issue taken up by Mita Banerjee in the paper “Indian diaspora meets Indo-chic: Fragmentation, fashion, and resistance in Meera Syal’s *Life Isn’t All Ha Ha Hee Hee*,” revolves around certain convergences, e.g. the appropriation of Indian cultural emblems (tattoos and dresses) in global consumer markets, that cannot be neatly reconciled. Using Madonna and characters in Syal’s novel, the author presents Indo-chic as a postmodern puzzle working through decontextualisation and recontextualisation. Hence, this could be interpreted, though ironically, as a means through which a diasporic community uncertain of its roots tries to “recover its origin through a Western fantasy of India” (71). The irreconcilable mix of Indo-chic and designer ‘ghetto fashion’, which in a sense represents the politics of exoticism, borders on what Graham Huggan calls ‘true’ ethnicity, being as it is comprised of hybrid ethnicity and pseudo-ethnicity. The point in Syal’s narrative, Banerjee concludes, is that the question of true ethnicity is unanswerable.

Christine Vogt-William’s “Bhangra babes: ‘Masala’ music and questions of identity and integration in South Asian-British women’s writing” is a reading of two novels from the perspective of British-Asian fusion music. She illustrates how most South Asian-British youth “go through fear, guilt, desire and anger while growing up, which signifies their ‘in-betweenness’” (87). The two novels *Hari-jan* (1992), by Ravinder Randhawa, and *Life Isn’t All Ha Ha Hee Hee* (2000), by Meera Syal, pay attention to Bhangra music and British-Asian fusion music (Masala music, as Syal calls it). This fusion is significant in forging the self-identification process of British-Asian youths, which as the author explains, “evinces a more assertive stamp in the articulation of a vital hybrid identification-process [...] in their negotiations with their parent’s cultures and those of their British home environment” (74).

Moving away from Britain and discourses of identity above, Ulrike Kistner takes us southwards to South Africa in her contribution “AIDS, pornography, and conspicuous consumption: Media strategies of an HIV/AIDS prevention campaign in South Africa”. The use of billboard messages such as “Everyone he has slept with, is

sleeping with you” and “Sex is sex: show me the money” by the LoveLife consortium break the cultural taboos of sex in a bid to demystify cultural myths and take the AIDS educational campaign closer to the public sphere. This paper therefore describes LoveLife campaign strategies, successes and criticisms addressed at them, showing how, though critics’ arguments have been neutralised, “any attempt to reconstruct the AIDS prevention campaign is unlikely to touch its core” (89).

“The global bidding for Dorothy Gale’s magical shoes: Salman Rushdie’s ‘At the auction of the ruby slippers’ as a (self-)reflection of the post-frontier predicament” by Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak shows the impact of the Oz cult or Oz myth derived from Frank Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and its unquestionable relevance to American socio-political milieux. The author, musing on Dorothy’s idolised magical shoes, construes them through Rushdie’s short story as the “most universally revered embodiments of emancipation, individualism, democracy, and the much-coveted transgression of an absurd and hostile reality” (105). Rushdie’s story could be read as an alternative of Oz functioning as an updated commentary on our times and the “urgent social, cultural and political themes of the present” (111).

The five papers in Part Three, “Imagining Communities,” discuss problems of identification and affiliation in the wake of globalisation, emphasising the flexibility in “Subverting Global Media Politics in the Local Media,” in which she examines how the American-dominated mediaspace (American film and television products, newsmedia and internet) is subverted by local media – represented in this case by Victor Masayesva’s film *Imagining Indians*. This semi-documentary moves away drastically from Hollywood’s presentation of Indians in stereotypical dichotomies such as, the ‘noble savage’ vs. the ‘bloodthirsty red devil’, and the docile, submissive ready-to-cooperate Indian vs. the fierce, hostage-taking killer Indian. As Knopf explains, this film is a “subversive media product” that dismantles clichés constructed in mainstream media in their commercialisation of Indigenous cultures hence becoming “an answering, anticolonial discourse” (136) that ushers the subaltern local media “into dialogue with the colonial global media” (136).

Still on films, Dieter Riemenschneider carries the debate to Maori films in his paper “Of Warriors, a Whalerider, and Venetians: Contemporary Maori Films.” Here he presents the open and ongoing public debate in New Zealand on national identity – especially Pakeha-Maori relations. This public

discourse, which seems to have left no one indifferent, has taken place in Maori films, three of which the author uses to illustrate “the political and aesthetic handling of the notion of *tūrangawaewae*, of home and nation” (138). The three feature films are *Once were Warriors* (1994), *Whale-Rider* (2002) and *Te Tangata Whai Rawa Weniti – The Māori Merchant of Venice* (2001). Enacted in a zone of contestation, these films recapture the Maori’s attempt to define their identity on the lines of intervening issues as immigration and place (land, claims on territory). For the Maori, the author insists, “it is a contested place, a location where different cultures and/or different ideologies encounter and oppose each other” (140).

In “Teaming multitudes: *Lagaan* and the nation of globality”, Dirk Wiemann explains how the overtly national Bollywood film *Lagaan* (land tax) adopts the more general tendency of post-liberalisation Bollywood productions that entails reaching out to target groups both at home and abroad, rather than following the “strictly national frame of reference within which Indian popular cinema used to be placed” (153). Although *Lagaan* still embodies Bollywood features such as song-and-dance, melodrama, and lengthy running time (3hrs 47mins), the English subtitle of the film, i.e. “Once upon a time in India,” “encodes, and symbolically performs, a particular strategy of inserting the national into the global by way of *substituting* ‘India’ for the ‘West’” (155). Interestingly, this makes it possible for ‘India’ to “occupy the very place formerly reserved for the West” (155), thus confirming Partha Chatterjee’s advice to postcolonial societies faced with globalisation to the effect that, to “fashion the forms of our own modernity, we need to have the courage at times to reject the modernities established by others.” Although India replaces the West, Wiemann reminds us that this would remain only in the realm of film and fairy tales ... i.e. “Once upon a time...”

Kistern Raupach returns to slavery and slave rebellion in the chapter “‘Blanched Bones, Mouldering Graves and Potent Spells’: White Constructions of Black Diasporic Rituals in Slave Cultures.” She challenges white perceptions of “black religious belief-systems as powerful, exotic and ultimately ‘other’ and [...] unintelligible and threatening to the established order” (171). Using colonial and slavery texts and literature she shows how Christianity was used as a softening tool for slaves since it promised them a life of no more trouble hereafter. This aside, the texts studied expose clearly how black diaspora thinking, rituals of remembrance,

social bonding, worship of African gods, and thought of return to the homeland effectively challenged constructions of white superiority – consider especially Obeah worship, which served as a representation of slave voices.

“Scotland as a Multifracted Postcolonial Go-between: Ambiguous Interfaces between (post)Celticism, Gaelicness, Scottishness and Post-colonialism,” by Silke Stroh revisits the simplistic binarisms ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’ and their multiple layers of ambivalence and hybridity when used on British and non-European cultures and their “internal cultural and discursive fragmentations within the British Isles themselves” (181). Fitting Scotland into the postcolonial debate – which, although it already exists, is less expansive than Ireland’s – Stroh identifies the complexity of the Scottish scene that makes it difficult for it to be classified either as (post)colonial or as belonging to the ‘Celtic’ fringe category. This makes a post-colonial approach controversial but still fruitful as long as the complexities are taken into account.

Part Four, “Constructing Common Ground”, is concerned with the production of global interconnectedness, and investigates shared commonalities that create links between the manifold global particularities. In “Universal Matters; Universals Matter,” Tabish Khair identifies the word ‘universal’ as the four-letter word of postcolonial studies. Tracing the use of the word and accompanying concepts (relational universality, universal human being, materialist universality, idealist universality, etc.) from Plato to Marx, the author opines that, in spite of the fact that the word ‘universal’ establishes some sort of a universe that could become an “agent of conscription,” it is nevertheless relevant to consider the universe of material activities in which we find ourselves understandable through and regulated by, “the conceptualisation of certain universals” (212). While it is true that these universals are not necessarily valid for all times, Khair cautions, they are at least “valid for as long as the material universe that called them dialectically into being lasts” (212).

Frank Lay’s chapter “Local Knowledge – Global Resistance: Policies of a New Technological ‘Enlightenment’” evaluates the emergence of a ‘new’ enlightenment – not related to, nor a linear successor of, ‘old’ enlightenment. This New Enlightenment, as proposed by Norman Livergood, exists in the same category as ‘anti-globalisationism’ and is designed to provide the non-expert world citizen with solutions to problems created by new media opportunities at the centre the internet – which has increased

dependency on virtuality and heightened complexity, given that now “non-graspable factors determine a considerably-sized proportion of human life” (216). With other problems such as the blurred interfaces between fact and fiction, and reality and virtuality, Lay calls for ways of simplifying these complexities. ‘New’ enlightenment is, therefore, an “urge to resist over-whelm-ing hegemony” in the form of what Viviane Forrester calls the “terror of economy”.

“Networks of the Media: Media Cultures, Connectivity and Globalisation”, by Andreas Hepp, also focuses on globalisation, explaining how it has changed media cultures, thus forcing us to theorise them in a new and different way. This entails, as he suggests, the adoption of a transcultural perspective that “makes it possible to discuss national media cultures as a specific kind of translocal media cultures” (227). The strength of this stance lies in the fact that globalisation has caused deterritorialisation. The network theory of the media proposed in this chapter becomes necessary, therefore, for “linking questions of globalisation with an historical view of change in media cultures” (238).

Also concerned with the intersection of global and local issues, Emer O’Sullivan’s paper “At the periphery of the periphery: Children’s literature, global and local” illustrates how the realm of children’s literature is among the few domains in which the “utopia of internationalisation has prospered” (241). Though part of a global marketplace, children’s literature, the author maintains, is not directly associated with the ideals of internationalism. O’Sullivan thus attempts to unify the diversity of international children’s literature by showing that, although there is no universality in childhood – see e.g. the Universal Republic of Childhood – there is nevertheless some sort of a universality (or internationality) in children’s literature. He proves this with a review of the north-west European model, the black African model, and the Irish model of children’s literature.

Part Five of the book is the only part that deals directly with linguistics: “Local colour in global English”, but is still linked to the others through its focus on local adaptations of (global) English in specific contexts. Consisting of two papers, it deals with patterns of communication in South Africa and Cameroon. In “Dialect Representations versus Linguistic Stereotypes in Literature: Three Examples from Indian South African English” Rajend Mesthrie proposes a framework for the “analysis of representations of second-language varieties of English in colonial and postcolonial literature” (261). He focuses on the use of the single grammatical

unit, the verb suffix *-ing* as it is used in Indian South African English. The data used comes from three sources: the satirical radio series *Applesammy and Naidoo*, the play *The Lahnee's pleasure* by Ronnie Govender, and the postmodernist novel *The Wedding*, by Imraan Coovadia. This data is complemented by actual speech data collected using the 'Labovian interview' model, and are used to assess the choices that writers and speakers make with different aims. These choices and their interpretations range from racist stereotyping to self-assertion through the adoption of specific linguistic identities.

Anne Schröder discusses from a sociolinguistic perspective, Camfranglais – “a complex hybrid language incorporating features from many of the languages spoken in Cameroon” (282) – in her chapter “Camfranglais: A Language with Several (Sur)faces and Important Sociolinguistic Functions.” After presenting its syntax and establishing the salience of its linguistic functions, Schröder settles on the conclusion that this language for wider communication is not an “ephemeral linguistic phenomenon” (296) since it has existed since the 1970s and is the preferred code for many youths especially in urban centres, where it fills the communicative gap left open by the official English and French languages.

Part Six, “Teaching new English literatures and cultures”, is made up of four papers that propose methods and examples of how new English literatures texts could be successfully integrated into school curricula – especially in German secondary schools – and what teaching strategies could be developed.

What Liesel Hermes proposes in “Henry Lawson’s ‘The Drover’s wife’ and the Australian short story” is a framework for teaching the “The Drover’s Wife” in “any unit/module about Australia” (310). She arrives at this decision only after tracing the life of Henry Lawson, the context in which he wrote, the Australian cultural concepts: ‘bush’ and ‘mateship’, and explaining how the story has “acquired the status of the classic Australian short story” (310). Her framework contains a sample list of reading tasks and the main issues to pay close attention to.

In his reading of *Are you experienced?*, Laurenz Volkmann, in the chapter “West meets East/East meets West: Teaching William Sutcliffe’s cult novel *Are you experienced?* (1997)”, presents the numerous themes and cross-cultural encounters embedded in the novel and how students’ understanding of the novel could be facilitated if these are explained adequately. It is therefore suited

as an introduction to theories such as post-colonialism, alterity, and ‘othering’. Although the novel is written by a British Briton rather than by someone from a postcolony, it still fits into the ‘purity’ of postcolonial writing, since, as he puts it, “Britain itself as the former imperial centre is very much part of the postcolonial world and has increasingly developed into a multi-ethnic society due to the massive influx of populations from the former colonies” (313).

Claudia Duppé and Manfred Gantner take the discussion further to the teaching of New Zealand poetry still in the German school (sixth form) curricula in their contribution “Read the text and let them speak, too: Teaching New Zealand poetry in the sixth form.” Often listed as a separate teaching unit, the authors propose that it would be better if the teaching of poetry were included in cultural learning. This back-door approach would help circumvent the notorious boredom that often affects students when poetry is mentioned, given especially that emphasis would be on “*not* teaching poetry as a genre but on teaching a foreign culture that speaks through the texts” (328). They present a successful experiment based on PowerPoint presentations and how the cultural learning-based approach encouraged students to “work with a poetic text and engage with it creatively” (338).

The last contribution in this final Part of the volume is Gisela Feurla’s “Teaching the new South Africa: The cartoon strip *Madam & Eve*.” Feurla uses her experience of teaching English through the popular cartoon strip *Madam & Eve* to explain why and how it could be used productively in teaching English in (German) secondary schools and cultural studies at university. She provides worksheets that plot a clear teaching scheme that takes into account the didactic context. The satirical messages in the strip come through easily in the graphic dimension of the cartoons: the caricaturing of representative social identities in particular.

The notions *globalisation* and *postcolonialism* have been viewed from divergent (and complementary and supplementary rather than contradictory) perspectives in the new English literatures. This volume of well-written and accessible papers shows how globalisation, rather than creating some sort of global (consumer) culture, has instead resulted in global fragments that are unified only by commonalities that reach between them. The book comes at the right moment, when globalisation still continues to be a fluid-like catchphrase whose exact impact and extent remain blurred by definitions and redefinitions of the

concepts of culture, identity and consumption.

Although the papers have been written by experts from different disciplines and educational institutions (university, German *Gymnasium*), and clearly display a touch of heterogeneity and plurality, they are strongly intertwined and held together by common concerns founded on (post)colonialism, the new literatures, and globalisation. Like the *fragments* in the title of the volume, they form a collective whole, though with salient themes of their own. The essays, from their different perspectives, consider dominant current and past representations of the *global* problematic and therefore call for their revision in ways that confirm our belonging within the “New World Order.”

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Angelica Duran, ed., *A Concise Companion to Milton*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.

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Blackwell's *Concise Companion to Milton*, edited by Angelica Duran, is meant to complement its award winning predecessor, the 29-chapter *Companion to Milton* (2001, 2003), edited by Thomas N. Corns. For while Corn's edition is used for advanced study, this volume's twelve “purposefully brief” chapters “are written with a minimum of scholarly jargon” in order to be easily read “alongside weekly primary readings” as “the one companion text to Milton's collected works required for undergraduate and graduate Milton courses” (1, 2).

The book is divided into three parts. The first part, “Surveys”, addresses the question of “why Milton matters” and, following the pattern established in *Milton Studies* (2005), where the question was answered by three distinguished veterans of Milton scholarship (Stanley Fish, Barbara Lewalski, and Joseph Wittreich), here, too, the answers are penned by no lesser names than Robert Thomas Fallon (“A Reading of His ‘left hand’: Milton's Prose”), John T. Showcross (“Shedding sweet influence”: The Legacy of John Milton's Works”), and Roy Flannagan (“‘The world all before [us]’: More Than Three Hundred Years of Criticism”).

The chapters of the second part, “Textual Sites”, follow Milton's works primarily in chronological order, addressing issues relevant to contemporary society as they emerge in specific texts or sets of texts, or being peculiar of those texts. Thus, Angelica Duran addresses the relationship of individuals and

their education in view of Milton's companion poems, “L'Allegro” and “Il Pensero”, his Latin epistola “Ad Patrem” and his educational tract *Of Education*. In a chapter on “Milton's Heroic Sonnets” Annabel Patterson shows how Milton brings to effect themes traditionally reserved for genres quite different from the sonnet, demonstrating how easily the reader may be misled if bringing “to the term ‘sonnet’ expectations derived exclusively from Petrarch, or Sidney, or Spenser, or Shakespeare” (93). In the following chapter, Paul Alpers encourages the reader to “think of pastoral not as a form of lyrical wish fulfillment, but as a specific mode of representation” when approaching Milton's *Lycidas*. Katsuhiko Engetsu engages Milton's occasional piece, *A Mask*, as a historical and cultural collaboration demonstrating how Milton's collaboration and friendship with the Royalist musician Henry Lawes undermines any attempt to fit Milton into “modern generalizations about any univocal ideology and aesthetic of literature” (125). The subsequent three chapters (8, 9, 10) tackle issues relevant to *Paradise Lost*. Achsah Guibbory, in “The Bible, Religion, and Spirituality in *Paradise Lost*”, shows how Milton's epic of mankind's fall, and the war in heaven is not merely a poetic account of the narrative recorded in the Bible but an attempt to “incorporate the whole sweep of human history and culture as it was known in Milton's day” (128). The fact that one of Guibbory's

examples revolves around the creation of Eve provides the reader with a sense of continuity, since Karen L. Edwards' following chapter on "Gender, Sex, and Marriage in *Paradise Lost*" ventures into the subject, with Adam retelling Raphael "his own and Eve's first moment of life and their subsequent union" (145). Given that the prelapsarian locus of the first marriage provides another copulative link between subsequent chapters, Juliet Lucy Cummins in "The Ecology of *Paradise Lost*" shows Milton entering into the early modern debate on proper relationship between human beings and the natural world "in his vision of unfallen life" (161). The last two chapters are devoted to Milton's *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, published in the same volume in 1671. Again, the reader is encouraged to compare the two works and engage in the debate on heroism as represented by Jesus's resistance to temptation – including the temptation to violence (chapter 11, "The Messianic Vision of *Paradise Regained*", by David Gay) – and by the unsettling

drama of Samson (chapter 12, "The Nightmare of History: *Samson Agonistes*", by Louis Schwartz).

The third part of the book, as its title suggests, provides readers with a number of useful reference points. Edward Jones's compilation of a selected chronology informs the reader of dates pertaining to Milton's life and work in the first column, while the second column lists events in the larger context of Milton's time. The "Selected Bibliography", compiled by J. Martin Evans, attends to topics and texts not covered in the volume and complements another helpful feature of the book, the Reference and Further Reading sections at the end of each chapter.

Introductory, without being cursory, *A Concise Companion to Milton* will be valued by all who teach Milton courses at undergraduate level, its references and open venues appreciated at graduate level, and the lucidity of its argument embraced by those venturing for the first time into the depths of Milton's unfettered mind.

Heather Leach and Robert Graham, *Everything You Need to Know about Creative Writing*. London: Continuum, 2007.

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Creative Writing is a strange sort of academic discipline, especially in Europe where work in universities tends to be classified as science. How can the talent, encouragement and motivation which come together in writing groups be anatomised, taxonomised and displayed to teachers and students alike? To be sure, students can write creatively in the classroom. This, however, is quite different from theorizing such a process.

In *Everything You Need to Know About Creative Writing*, Heather Leach and Robert Graham seem well aware that prescription for creative writing may appear ridiculous. Their aim is to disarm the sceptical or recalcitrant reader with a 'tongue-in-cheek' (1) style. As with many guides to creative writing, the theory aims to emulate the practice. So, Leach and Graham tell us that their guide for 'writers and writing teachers' aims to be 'practical, creative and thought-provoking' (2). 'Creative' style seems as important as information in this Continuum textbook.

Without the stylised contributions from seven practitioners of the discipline -- Leach, Graham, Gareth Creer, Ursula Hurley, Helen Newall, Jenny Newman and Harriet Tarlo - *Everything You Need to Know About Creative Writing* might run the risk of parodying creativity. It is organised along the lines of an encyclopaedia, an A-Z with the ambition to be 'as comprehensive as possible' (1) in this field.

Perhaps only James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) and George Perec's *La Vie mode de l'emploi* (1978) have similar creative goals. Of course, those novels parody encyclopaedic rather than creative ambitions.

Leach and Graham are aware that their enterprise is a bit of a lark (1). The book's tone of 'lightness and humour' (1) is intentional. For example, under the useful theoretical heading 'Death of the Author, The', we are told that 'if you observe what actually happens when you are writing and reading, you will find that Barthes wasn't as daft as his theory sounds' (36). This is basic and accessible, addressed to people who may never have heard of Roland Barthes. Maybe it will make the young smile. However, I doubt very much whether amusing news of the author's death will encourage budding Prousts to become authors themselves.

Hoping to jettison theoretical advice, I turned to a seemingly empirical entry: 'desk'. Dr Johnson might have blanched to learn that 'desks can become fetishistic' (40), and would surely have slapped one robustly to prove otherwise. Still, every writer needs a desk, so the entry is not a waste of space. A cross reference to 'room' brings the reader to remarks on Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and the need for 'quiet and privacy...in order to develop the creative state of mind' (151). Disagreeing with E.M. Forster, perhaps, Anne Dillard is quoted as

recommending ‘a room with no view, so imagination can meet memory in the dark’ (151). We trust that Dillard is careful that she does not bump into her ‘fetishised’ desk while groping around in this ‘dark’ space. Yes, *Everything You Need to Know About Creative Writing* is fun.

The question remains as to whether it is useful. This is a reference book, which is not intended to be read from cover to cover. Nor is it a scholarly guide for lecturers like, for instance, *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing* (2007). Indeed, *Everything You Need to Know About Creative Writing* is markedly non-academic both in its informality and likely readership. Young people alone with their word processors or participating in writing groups outside the university may well be the true beneficiaries of this unimposing and superficially user-friendly guide.

Many of the entries come complete with cross-references. Most end with a ‘further reading’ list. For example, in the ‘romance plot’ entry the reader is recommended to read *The Complete Novels of Jane Austen*, *French Mediaeval Romances from the Lays of Marie de France* and the Mills and Boon website at <www.millsandboon.co.uk>. That seems a pretty comprehensive introduction to the subject. The following entry on ‘Romanticism’ discusses the self-romanticising of contemporary writers, and cross-refers to entries on ‘block’ and ‘imagination’. Turning back to ‘block’, we find a good two-page entry on the subject which begins: ‘Depending on your point of view, *writer’s block* can be a painful psychological disturbance or a self-deluding excuse.’ (17) This is impressive enough. However, flipping forward from ‘block’ in search of ‘imagination’ we are again

disappointed: there is, in fact, no such entry. The editors only imagined including it.

The final pages of *Everything You Need to Know About Creative Writing* features an extended ‘further reading’ list with such worthwhile titles as Linda Anderson’s *Creative Writing: A Workbook with Readings* (2005) and John Whitworth’s *Writing Poetry* (2001). There is also a helpful ‘alternative routes’ section, which enables the potential writer to access a series of related entries (assuming the editors have checked that they exist). These headings are: Attitudes; Beginning; Blocks; Characters, narrators and viewpoints; Design and layout; Editing and revision; Experimental writing; Fiction; Form and genre; Grammar and punctuation; Ideas and movements; IT; Plot; Poetry; Publishing; Reading and research; Scriptwriting; Self, mind and consciousness; Skills; Structure; Workshops and groups, and Writing life. Under the last of these, for example, we are directed to our old favourites ‘room’ and ‘desk’, as well as ‘being a writer’, ‘eavesdropping’, ‘garrets’, ‘genius’, ‘gestation’, ‘journey’, ‘learning’, ‘notebooks’, ‘skills’ and ‘zeitgeist’.

Turning to ‘zeitgeist’, the final entry in this guide, we learn that ‘writers who are in touch with their time and who write with commitment and passion are *part* of the zeitgeist; one of the makers and shakers, not one of the followers’ (190). This sentence is ungrammatical – ‘writers’ are not ‘one’ but several – and casts the ultimate sad shadow over a book which the editors hoped would include ‘the occasional flash of lightness and humour’ (1). Unfortunately, the flashes of useful lightness are too occasional; and the humour results from some sloppy editing and, ironically, bad writing.

Bernard J. Muir, *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*. The Exeter DVD. Software Nick Kennedy. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006. ISBN 0 85989 631 5.

Erik Kooper (Utrecht, The Netherlands)

Few readers of this review with a degree in English will never have read a poem from the so-called Exeter Book, even though they may not recall what exactly the Exeter Book is. Poems like *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *Widsith*, *Deor*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, *The Ruin*, and of course the riddles are part of many English departments’ set programme, and they have been included in practically every anthology of English literature since time memorial. The codex in which they are found is formally known as Exeter Cathedral, Dean and Chapter Library MS 3501. It is, as the blurb on the DVD’s cover says, “the largest and arguably the earliest and most important

surviving collection of vernacular poetry from Anglo-Saxon England.” The manuscript has been part of Exeter Cathedral Library since at least the time of Bishop Leofric (d. 1072) and was written c. 965-975. But, as is well known, many of the poems are considerably older than their written versions; most notably, this is true for texts like *Widsith*, usually dated to the late seventh century.

It goes almost without saying that a collection like the Exeter Book, which in Muir’s list of contents contains 49 items plus the collection of 94 riddles, is invaluable for the history of English literature, but no less so for such disciplines as paleography,

history of the language, theology (many of the poems are religious works), and cultural studies. Numerous editions and studies of one or more poems testify to the importance of this manuscript, including a facsimile edition (1933; its introduction has been included in the present DVD), and an edition of all the texts in the manuscript (1936, as vol. III of Krapp and Dobbie's *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*). In 1994 Bernard Muir's 2-volume edition of the Exeter Anthology (as he prefers to call it) was published, followed by a revised second edition in 2000. It seemed as if we had here the definitive edition of this corpus of poems, but the appearance of the Exeter Anthology DVD has proved us wrong.

With regard to electronic aids and devices Anglo-Saxon studies have been fortunate in that at a very early state the *Beowulf* manuscript was used to experiment with HTML-supported texts (see Kevan Kiernan, *The Electronic Beowulf*, 2 CD-ROMs, 1999). The new electronic edition of the Exeter Book shows to what heights these developments have led, and to what extent a combined textual and visual representation of the manuscript has surplus value when compared to 'traditional' text or facsimile editions. To put it in plain terms: once I had started the DVD I was lost. Completely unaware of my surroundings, I spent three hours without noticing that time had passed only to awake to the reality of

everyday departmental life by a knock on my door. Bernard Muir and Nick Kennedy have given us a user-friendly, esthetically attractive, and all-encompassing facsimile-cum-edition of the text. Apart from necessary and obvious categories like an extensive introduction, with a discussion of the various aspects of the manuscript, and an exhaustive bibliography, the DVD provides crystal clear images of every page of the manuscript, side by side with the text. On the manuscript pages, words, or passages on which comments have been provided are marked, and these can be enlarged so that e.g. scribal corrections can clearly be seen. The printed texts are equally supported by both textual and explanatory notes, which can be made to appear at the bottom of the printed text. In addition, a number of poems can be listened to in recordings in the original Old English or in Modern English renderings.

Unfortunately this enviable toy comes with a price attached to it that will move it solidly out of reach of most individual users, for few will be able or willing to pay £ 275 or \$ 425 for it. But libraries ought to buy it, and with modern beamer teaching possibilities it should be possible to employ it in classroom situations. And it would be a shame to miss the opportunity to make students acquainted with the manuscript culture that underlies all-time favourites like *The Wanderer* or *The Wife's Lament*.

Pape, Walter, ed., *A View in the Rear-Mirror: Romantic Aesthetics, Culture, and Science Seen from Today*. Studien zur Englischen Romantik (new series), volume 3. Trier: WVT, 2006. Xiii + 265 pages.

Marco de Waard (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

This collection, a *Festschrift* compiled for Frederick Burwick "on the occasion of his seventieth birthday," reflects Burwick's scholarly interests as well as the impact he has had as a Professor of English and Comparative Literature at UCLA between 1986 and 2004. As the author of *The Damnation of Newton: Goethe's Color Theory and Romantic Perception* (1986), *The Haunted Eye: Perception and the Grotesque in English and German Romanticism* (1987), and *Poetic Madness and the Romantic Imagination* (1996), Burwick has long crossed boundaries between Romantic aesthetics, science, philosophy, and psychology, producing challenging interdisciplinary work on theories and cultural constructions of perception, the imagination, and (self-)consciousness between ca. 1780-1830. Indeed, Burwick, whose first articles and edited volumes appeared in the mid-1960s, may have "practiced a Cultural Studies approach to literature long before it became en vogue to do so" (x), although it is pro-

bably more accurate to say that in his hands, Romantic scholarship continued to maintain the close ties with intellectual history and the history of philosophy which characterised it before the ascent of poststructuralist approaches in the 1970s and 1980s. That this intellectual-historical strand in Romantic studies continues to be viable is successfully borne out by this *Festschrift*, which is particularly interesting on Coleridge, Romantic science, and the cultural afterlife of Romanticism in modern Europe.

To start with Coleridge: the most important contribution to Coleridge studies in this collection is Elinor Shaffer's polemically pitched but very sensible critique of a recent scholarly edition of Coleridge's hitherto unpublished *Opus Maximum*. Legendary during its author's lifetime, who often referred to it as his "Great Work", but who never completed what amounts to 550 pages of manuscript, the *Opus Maximum* saw the light of day in 2002 as

volume 15 of the *Collected Works* (Princeton UP). Unfortunately, however, what Shaffer calls a practice of “tendentious editing” and “significant omission in a plethora of annotation” (166) now jeopardises what should have been a rescue operation. Shaffer argues persuasively that the editor’s “Prolegomena” obfuscate Coleridge’s sympathetic engagement with German *Naturphilosophie* and “Higher Criticism” of the Bible to the extent that the *Opus Maximum* can be cast – as in fact its editor does – as a piece of religiously motivated, “proleptic” anti-Darwinism. What is more, Shaffer shows that in the case of a fragmentary manuscript that poses a range of editorial problems (concerning the relations between and dating of its composite parts, the role of collaborators, its place in the author’s “system”), such a contestable and anachronistic reading easily enroaches upon the presentation of the text itself, making it vulnerable to further misconstruals. Shaffer’s critique has urgency, and deserves to be answered.

Coleridge is also touched upon in a section that gauges Romantic science from a present-day vantage point, in line with the “rear-mirror” metaphor of this *Festschrift*’s title. Matthew Schneider’s “*Cutis anserina*: Spine Tingles, Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, and the New Science of Literary Response” revisits Romantic “brain science” and its bearings on contemporary aesthetic theory to show how recent advances in neuroscientific technology validate Romantic intuitions about “the intersections of mind and brain.” It turns out that Romantic literature, with its exploration of liminal forms of mental functioning, and of the interface between perception, illusion, and delusion, “still has the power to identify the key issues in defining the human” (177). Two other essays join in this reevaluation of the Romantic science, likewise emphasising the resonances between present-day psychology and neurobiology and Romantic insights into the “deep interchangeability of matter and spirit.”

The “rear-mirror” metaphor also informs the concluding section to this collection, entitled “Romantic Aftermath.” In what is the most ambitious essay in this *Festschrift*, devoted to “Sport and the Discourse of Mass Modernity in Weimar Germany,” Andrew Hewitt argues that early twentieth-century Germany saw a remarkable fusion between a Romantic language of subjectivity and the hyper-rationalism of *Neue Sachlichkeit* aesthetics that was apparently antagonistic to it. In an astute demonstration of discourse analysis, Hewitt focuses on

German debates over “sport,” originally imported from the Anglo-Saxon world, to show how it functioned as a site for the production of a new model of subjectivity: a model that both differed from the rationalised, industrialised human subject that was presupposed by German *Körperkultur*, and from the model of subjectivity that found embodiment in the Anglo-Saxon, sport-loving gentleman. The *Sachlichkeit* discourse of sport – taking its cue from Schiller, among others – transcended both models as it envisaged subjects who produced a new relation to their social world in the very moment of sporting, turning sport into a highly individual process of aesthetic *Tathandlungen* or creative acts. In this specific meaning, “sport” in Weimar Germany could – surprisingly – form a conduit for the “passage of Romantic theory into mass cultural practice” (251).

Coleridge, Romantic science, and “Romantic aftermaths” put apart, other essays in this collection deal with English poetry and German aesthetic theory. They include an essay by Peter Wagner on William Blake’s “iconotexts” which signals that Blake scholarship is moving into a promising new phase as recent theories of intermediality help it restore Blake’s complex word-image mediations to a central place in the study of the “illuminated” verse, redressing an imbalance in Blake studies that has often been noticed but rarely met head-on. Special mention is also due to Paul Douglass’s entertaining essay on the young Caroline Lamb. Drawing extensively on unpublished letters in several British archives, Douglass revisits Lamb’s life and writings before her much publicised affair with Lord Byron. He presents a budding authoress and proto-feminist social critic who was developing a literary voice all her own before the male poets and lovers of her later life would put her down for her peers and for posterity – and very effectively so – as a troublemaker and a “monstrous” mother. Douglass convinces us that a proper assessment of Caroline Lamb’s work – indeed, a critical “unsilencing” – has long been overdue.

All things considered, *A View in the Rear-Mirror* makes a welcome collection. Although the quality of the sixteen contributions is uneven (some essays left unmentioned here read like unedited conference papers, while others are carefully polished and substantially annotated), the net result is an inspiring view of the state of the art in Romantic scholarship at present. The *Festschrift* ends, usefully, with an 8-page bibliography of Frederick Burwick’s publications and with an index.

Line Henriksen, *Ambition and Anxiety: Ezra Pound's Cantos and Derek Walcott's Omeros as Twentieth-Century Epics*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006.

Patricia Novillo-Corvalán (London, UK)

In “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*” Jorge Luis Borges proposed a *ficción* of a twentieth-century French writer who set himself the arduous task of rewriting Cervantes’s masterpiece. The humorous, tongue-in-cheek tone of Borges’s exercise is underlined in the paradoxical title of the piece, which teasingly shifts the authorship of the greatest work in the Spanish language to the fictitious Frenchman Menard. In effect, Menard’s ambitious enterprise was to produce a few pages of *Don Quixote* that coincided word-for-word and line-for-line with the original. In a typical Borgesian irony, Menard’s *Quixote* becomes, ultimately, richer and/or more subtle than Cervantes’s owing to the inescapable fact that language has evolved within the four hundred years of history separating the two *Quixotes*, and generations of readers have added new interpretations to the text. What must be stated here, above all, is the crucial fact that if Cervantes’s *Quixote* became the subject of Borges’s fiction, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* was at the forefront of Borges’s meditation on reading, translation, and rewriting. Indeed, the very title, “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*”, may be read as a veiled analogue of “James Joyce, Author of *Ulysses*”, wherein literary chronologies are dismantled and the reader is therefore enticed to approach the *Quixote* as if it was written by Pierre Menard (or Borges), and Homer’s *Odyssey* as if it was written by Joyce. On a wider scale, Borges’s parable may be read in parallel with Reed Way Dasenbrock’s suggestion in *Imitating the Italians* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) that a whole generation of Anglophone modernist writers aspired to rewrite Dante’s *Commedia* in the twentieth century. The ambitious desire to shift the epic legacy of Dante (and Homer) across language, culture and history, became the literary quest of an impressive gallery of modernist and present-day writers: James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Derek Walcott. The scale and enormity of this type of creative endeavour, the obvious risks and difficulties involved, the composition process employed, and, finally, the success, semi-failure or total failure of the transpositions are at the heart of Line Henriksen’s impressive and wide ranging study *Ambition and Anxiety: Ezra Pound's Cantos and Derek Walcott's Omeros as Twentieth-Century Epics*.

The principal conceit of Henriksen’s thesis is that

it is possible to trace an epic heritage, a recognizable line that runs from Homer, through Virgil, and on to Ovid, Dante, and Milton. Thus, writers such as Joyce, Pound, and Walcott emulated this canonical heritage and inscribed their modern “epics” as the successors of a long-standing Western tradition. But writing in the wake of the grand masters of the classical epic model is no small feat, and this enterprise, Henriksen claims, has been differently undertaken by Pound and Walcott. This is clearly stated in the “Introduction”,

The *Cantos* and *Omeros* share a generic heritage through which the two twentieth-century texts are associated with what are canonically and conventionally the most important poems of the Western literary tradition: the Homeric poems, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Dante’s *Commedia* and (in the English tradition) Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The two poems represent two stances within twentieth-century poetics and two approaches to the epic genre: one apparently a semi-failure, the other a success. (p.xiii)

Henriksen, an accomplished linguist and assistant professor at Copenhagen School, structured her book according to the curvilinear pattern of the epic trajectory, thus tracing the grand epic arch from Homer to Walcott through interrelated and progressive chapters. Predictably, the book opens with an insightful and critically informed investigation of “Homer and Genre”, in which she impressively tackles the generic issue that anticipates the larger question that echoes throughout the book – What is an epic? And, more specifically in relation to Pound’s *Cantos* and Walcott’s *Omeros* – is it an epic? Henriksen offers a number of answers to these questions which are neither unidirectional nor straightforward, and, ultimately, she recognizes the complexity, fluidity, and indeterminacy of the epic as a literary category, particularly as she compares the vibrant tapestry of the classical epic with the wider, more versatile canvas of the novel. Thus, the transmutation of epic and novelistic elements results in the richer form of what she refers to as “novelised modern epic”, which owes a great deal to Mikhail Bakhtin’s influential concepts of polyglossia, dialogism, and carnival that Henriksen employs to describe Pound’s and Walcott’s projects. Yet the circuits or pathways that led Pound and Walcott

along the epic journey are still the subject of much disagreement among critics. Worth mentioning here, for example, is Pound's unbending remark that Dante's *Commedia* did not constitute an epic but rather "a cycle of mystery plays" (107) and, furthermore, his refusal to brand the *Cantos* an epic, "it ain't an epic" (105). Equally significant is the fact that Walcott denied the epic quality of *Omeros*, in a conscious attempt to distance himself from the imperialistic legacy of the genre and, moreover, to disassociate his work from the more alarming fascist battleground inaugurated by Pound's anti-Semitic *Cantos*. In spite of Pound's and Walcott's denial that their works conform to the criteria of the epic, whether justifiable or not, Henriksen remains resolute in her endeavour to reinvent them as novelised epics, a hybrid model of a much reinvigorated canon which equally applies to the Joycean project. What emerges, above all, is a dialectic in which she constructs Pound's and Walcott's dialogue with the epic as a gesture that reveals two opposite impulses. On the one hand, she situates them within the epic ancestry integrated by the blind rhapsode and the ensuing lineage of Virgil, Dante, et al. On the other, Henriksen is keen to challenge strict definitions of the epic, and to foster a reading of the *Cantos* and *Omeros* as the composite site of a complex interweaving of genres, including the epic. Further, she provides a focal point through which the looming shadows of the grand epic poets continue to haunt their successors, and their restless spectres creep up in their works; Dante is to Pound and Walcott what Homer was to Virgil and what the father-figure of Virgil was to Dante. Consequently, Henriksen argues that Walcott and Pound emulated their predecessors by incorporating into their ambitious enterprises the defining characteristics of the epic, namely formulaic writing, use of epithets, recurrence of the sea metaphor, as well as the assimilation of the English Homeric heritage, from Chapman to Pope and, in Walcott's case, the more recent, accomplished translations of Robert Fitzgerald and Richmond Lattimore. The post-Homeric poet, then, will emulate a series of formulae and devices which constitute the most salient feature of the work of his predecessor(s), thus explaining the conflictual impulses of "ambition" and "anxiety" (non-Bloomian).

One of the most remarkable aspects of Henriksen's study is her careful and detailed examination of holograph pages from the *Cantos* and *Omeros* in an attempt to reinforce their indebtedness to the epic tradition. She patiently traces the evolution of Pound's early Imagist poem "The Coming of War:

Actaeon" and studies it alongside its gradual transformation through several fascinating drafts of Canto 4, which underline Pound's interweaving of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* with other French and Italian traditions, and his lacing of several levels of narration. Equally fascinating is her survey of Walcott's construction of metaphors by means of her access to the drafts of *Omeros* which are held in the University of West Indies, St. Augustine. Through her perusal of the evolutionary growth of a fragment from chapter 2, she underlines the formulaic aspect of the book and Walcott's reliance on metaphor as his principal literary trope, chiefly in contrast to what she views as Pound's metonymic poetic, both concepts grounded on Roman Jakobson's notions of metonymy and metaphor.

Yet behind the ambition to write a twentieth-century *Quixote*, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, or *Commedia* lies the deeper, inescapable anxiety concerning the success or failure of the enterprise. Hence, the fundamental question is, at any rate – How (un)successful is it? Here we find ourselves on much more uncertain terrain, particularly since Henriksen had to take into account previous not-so-congratulatory verdicts of Pound's rewriting of Dante's imperialism vis-à-vis his flirtation with Fascism. While she admits Pound's admiration for the larger-than-life figure of Mussolini and his concern with the complex economical forces of history, she praises the lyrical artistry of Pound's writing as the redeeming side of his much-criticized *Cantos*. Her overall estimation thus stands midway, neither success nor total failure, but semi-failure. Contrarily, the success of Walcott's *Omeros* speaks for itself, yet her insightful analysis of his "Caribbean, Metaphoric Epic" remains an outstanding contribution to scholarship. I would have liked, nonetheless, to see an informed conclusion that addressed the generic issues raised in the introduction, and the development of the epic as a whole. Where do these epic crossroads take us, we may ask, not only during the twentieth century but even more so at the beginning of the twenty-first century? Nevertheless, this lack of a far-reaching conclusion, Line Henriksen's *Ambition and Anxiety: Ezra Pound's Cantos and Derek Walcott's Omeros as Twentieth-Century Epics* is an accomplished, well-written, and critically informed study that will prove an invaluable resource to students and scholars of a wide range of subject areas: classical studies, linguistics, postcolonialism, and English, Italian and French literature. It remains, first and foremost, Comparative Literature at its best.

Fiona Tolan. *Margaret Atwood: Feminism and Fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.

Natasa Bakić-Mirić (Niš, Serbia)

Too many books have perhaps been written about Margaret Atwood, one of Canada's most famous women writers, a feminist icon (although the comparison may not please her), a writer so revered at this point in her literary career that she could write a shopping list and someone would slap an award on it. However, Fiona Tolan's new contribution to the field is valuable, giving an overview of the eleven novels in which the author seeks to establish links between Atwood's fiction, feminist politics, change in gender communication and cultural dialogue. In many ways, it feels like a literary scrapbook examining the novels of Margaret Atwood in conjunction with the development of second-wave feminism in an attempt to demonstrate the existence of a dynamic relationship between her fiction and feminist theory. Although Atwood's work has been regarded as a barometer of feminist thought those protagonists are often a kind of "every-woman" or weaker members of society, several of Atwood's novels can also be classified as science fiction, even though her writing is superior to the normal formulae of the genre.

Each of the eleven chapters deals with one of Atwood's novels, as Tolan interprets Atwood from the perspective of second- and third-wave feminism, and charts many of the aspects of change that her work has brought to the world. The first three chapters analyse *The Edible Woman*, *Surfacing*, and *Lady Oracle*, highlighting Atwood's contributions to early second-wave feminist thought such as feminist identity, hysteria, gynocriticism, ecofeminism, demystification of the body, and mothering. Chapter IV analyses *Life before Man*, the novel where the reader encounters the nihilistic despair of the two main characters, Elizabeth and Nate – a married couple struggling to preserve their decaying marriage – and the futility of their efforts to do so. In this novel Atwood also reveals the strata of humor and pathos that make up modern familial and romantic love, all the while reminding her readers of the constant threat of

imminent extinction. In Chapter V, Tolan focuses on *Bodily Harm*, in which Atwood tries to distance herself from the feminist novel but advances into areas still in their infancy, such as the politics of the gaze, which would later be extended into discussions about the colonial gaze and power politics. Chapter VI deals with *The Handmaid's Tale* and points to Atwood's decision to advocate caution and defend liberty before ideology, while in Chapter VII *Cat's Eye* serves as a mode of understanding the articulation of the body, refusing to reduce it to its cultural expression. Chapter VII deals with *The Robber Bride*, where Atwood re-examines essentialist identities in racial and post-colonial terms, confronting implicit racial prejudices, and where she begins to look at the position of the "other woman" and otherness. In *Alias Grace*, which Tolan re-examines in Chapter IX, Atwood explores the themes of identity by constructing and deconstructing the self and its ontology. Chapter X deals with Atwood's brilliant *The Blind Assassin*, which won her the 2000 Booker Prize, a novel concerned with the manner in which events are lived, encoded in myth and legend, and passed down to each new generation in a search to find new freedoms within old patterns. In the final chapter we then come to grips with Atwood's (by 2003) latest novel, *Oryx and Crake*, depicting a Huxleyan postmodernist dystopia which, for many, represents a post-feminist future in which questions of genetic predisposition and cultural experience are explicitly examined, while feminist discourse proves once again to be a valuable and constructive backdrop to Atwood's writing.

Fiona Tolan's *Margaret Atwood: Feminism and Fiction* will undoubtedly find its place with readers who appreciate everything Atwood has written so far, since it effectively demonstrates the fictional and theoretical modern feminist thought and theory in a contemporary linking of fictional and theoretical discourses that do not simply coexist but are mutually intertwined.