

to host this masterless
being.

(Where do we come from
and whereto do we go
on these tortuous paths
who would know?)

The lonely traveller – a convict
condemned to spend in solitude this last trip.

Just now
too much silence
as if the clock had stopped
its impudent ticking
the fridge stays voiceless
and the elevator's mute
collapsed from the noise
in the oasis of stillness
while cars pass just now and then
though there's no shortage of fuel.

I suppose people are watching horrified
the news on the TV
the concrete walls
the soundproof window panes
isolate them temporarily
in holes of silence
from the guns' roar.

Red holes on the world's map
and in the high banner.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

“Postcolonial Justice”, ASNEL and GAST joint conference
(Potsdam and Berlin, May 29 – June 1, 2014)

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This year's joined ASNEL and GAST conference, which marked the 25th anniversary of both associations, focused on the topic of “Postcolonial Justice”. Papers were invited that addressed topics such as postcolonial justice and the politics of reconciliation, postcolonial justice and globalisation/aesthetics/language/media, postcolonial justice in the marketplace, postcolonial justice and academic practice, to name but a few. The core questions that permeated the four-day conference centred on the agency and power implicit in the act of executing justice; in how far systematic justice still upholds the binary of the self as perpetrator and the other as hapless victim; and on the responsibilities that the witnesses of injustice have in a globalised media world. It is a very timely topic and the conference organisers excelled at putting together a conference programme that had it all: thought-provoking keynotes and panels, a poster session for early-career

scholars and a teacher's workshop, author readings and film screenings, and a social programme that offered plenty opportunity for socialising.

To offer a more detailed topical insight, in the following few paragraphs I decided to focus on Saturday's events. Benita Parry, in her keynote lecture on the impossibilities of postcolonial justice, stressed the legal and philosophical discourses in order to provide a platform from which to critically enquire the conference programme as such. Parry questioned from the outset whether a shared concept of justice, which we often assume in our discussion of postcolonial justice, does indeed exist. When we are talking about postcolonial justice, does the self ever really know what justice means to the other? Can we ever eradicate social, political, and aesthetic differences in order to arrive at norms that are valid across nations and cultures, across time and space? The answer, for Parry, is and must be a resounding *no*, because there is no "transcendent reason or divine law" that teaches us how to be just. Moral universalism does not exist, because morality as such is a social construct. According to Parry, there is nothing invariable about morality. It is, and always must be, "their morals and ours", because morality builds on ethical stands that are incompatible. Morality cannot bridge conflicting interests in the world. And not to take these conflicting interests into account is not to do justice to the multiplicity of interests. Any assertion of universal principles dispenses with any notion of multiplicity and individuality that postcolonialism as a discipline is built upon. It also dispenses with any notion of justice, seeing that justice "is respecting the singularity of the other", as Parry paraphrases Jacques Derrida.

I found Parry's keynote lecture truly engaging and also fitting, seeing that one of the conference's main objectives was to critically engage with the idea of postcolonial justice itself. Is it possible? Can it ever be just? And does the conflation of two so highly contested terms, justice and the postcolonial, ever yield definite answers? In deconstructing both terms, Parry very convincingly showed that a lack of answers does not necessarily diminish the search for these answers and the discussion of the issues at stake. Parry raised questions that pervaded much of Saturday's discussions, both in and out of sessions. What position are we speaking from when we talk about postcolonial justice, and do we sufficiently take the privilege of that position of speech into account?

This question was echoed in Kirsten Sandrock's talk on "The Poetics of Justice in Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton*" in a pre-lunch panel on "Justice in the Literary Field". Sandrock mainly focused on the narratological aspects of the book and on how the role of the author and the role of the narrator and focaliser relate to questions of justice. Sandrock referred back to Parry's keynote by differentiating between law and justice. Law, as a possibility of executing justice, is also always part of the power machinery and is thus implicated with questions of authority. Authority is granted to people who have access to the executing power. Thus, the question really is: what is this power that is needed to execute justice? In the case of Rushdie's *Joseph Anton*, this power lies in the narratological structure of the book itself. As an autobiography written in the third person, the narrative evokes objectivity, impartiality, neutrality, and truth, which are largely considered preconditions for executing justice. Also, on the level of content, Rushdie stresses that some values are, or at least should be, universals and absolutes: Freedom, for Rushdie, is human nature and not culturally relative. As Sandrock pointed out, this is how the narrative of the book, which focuses on the Fatwa years, denies the legitimacy of the fatwa and questions the right of anybody to own the authority to proclaim justice. Justice, for Rushdie as for Parry, is deeply implicated with power. But in opposition to Parry, Rushdie challenges the notion of cultural relativism, which he considers the death of ethical thought. This is also where the power of the narrative's focaliser and the authority of the book's author merge. Rushdie uses the focaliser within the narrative to set things right and he uses his authority as a well-known public figure to restore personal justice outside the narrative. The discussion afterwards then questioned whether that act of exerting justice is truly just, which again was very much done in the spirit of Parry's critical enquiry into the idea and ideal of postcolonial justice itself.

In that panel's second and last talk, Carola Briese talked about "Postcolonial Justice in the Literary Marketplace: Contemporary Postcolonial Fiction in the Literary Field". Briese focused on literary marketing and its effects on the circulation of fiction. She addressed notions of justice such as reconciliation and recognition and argued that postcolonial fiction has a transformative potential on the literary marketplace, both in terms of content and in terms of the networks within the literary market that they create. Briese analysed and compared the covers, press releases, design and marketing of different novels by postcolonial writers and argued that this para-text has a strong impact on the public. Although marketing does not change the text itself, it can change how the novel is received. Briese also pointed out how global media creates narrative about narratives and how these meta-narratives, to a certain extent, still rely on colonial stereotypes of the exotic other. Stereotypical cultural narratives are being used to appeal to specific readerships and, in this process, marketing specifically highlights certain cultural narratives and silences others. What I took away from the talk is that this intertext which is being created is as worthy of evaluation as the text itself when discussing questions of power, the role of the author, and the position of power as a position of speaking and being heard – and of writing and being read.

The question of being seen and the power that bestows on the subject was the topic of the afternoon keynote by Suvendrini Perera on "Visibility, Atrocity and the Subject of Postcolonial Justice". Perera questioned the possibility of international justice in the aftermath of wartime atrocities and focused on the Sri Lankan Civil War between the Sri Lankan government and the militant organisation Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. For Perera, this war against terror raised crucial questions on the possibility and legitimacy of a "just war" and how particularly postcolonial countries deal with their violent present as a result of their violent past. What are the terms on which the atrocities of the past enter the discourse of justice and international order of the present? Perera focused on the dynamics between retribution for colonial atrocities and justice in the postcolonial world. Perera continued her discussion of international responsibility and recognition versus national laws and sovereignty with the example of war crimes committed on the territory of sovereign states that are globally visible due to media coverage. This international attention, though often enough denied or insufficient, nevertheless has the power to allow for the accountability of war crimes and can thus reinstate international law and human rights. This question of responsibility and recognition struck me as crucially important, because it shows that the power to execute justice comes with a moral responsibility that can be very difficult to discern.

The round table discussion on "American Studies as Postcolonial Studies" concluded the academic part of Saturday's programme. Rüdiger Kunow, Gesa Mackenthun, John Carlos Rowe, Katja Sarkowsky, and Nicole Waller discussed the intersections of American studies and postcolonial studies in such an engaging way that I doubt that by the end of the event there was anybody in the audience who was not convinced that a cross-fertilisation between the two disciplines would prove mutually beneficial. Parallels were drawn both on the topical and the institutional level, but also fissures were explored, such as the Americanisation of modern missionary movement which exports faith-based politics to other parts of the world and is therefore, from a postcolonial perspective, and from the perspective of queer theory and LGBT rights, highly problematic. The discussion also focused on the complex role the US itself plays as a nation within the field of postcolonial studies. There is a tension between the status of the US as a postcolonial nation and as an imperial power. From the 1980s to the early 2000s, the US was therefore largely excluded from the postcolonial discourse, while postcolonial theories, however, found their way into American studies. Among the panellists, there was consensus that both fields are now ready to see how they can mutually benefit from each other's findings and the only questions that remained were how we can now implement the kinds of intersections that were highlighted on the institutional level.

I have found this year's ASNEL/GASt conference to be highly intellectually stimulating. All the talks I listened to challenged comfortable and homogenising readings of culture and asked how justice can really be achieved in a present that is still marked by its colonial past. The intellectual vigour of the discussions was, as always, impressive and very much had me looking forward to next year's conference – the first GAPS event in the history of ASNEL.

'Theatre and History: Cultural Transformations'. 23rd Annual Conference of the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE). (University of Hamburg, Germany, 19–22 June 2014)

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In spite of the proclaimed 'end of history', the historical has remained a powerful presence in plays and performances of the last decades. Many of these plays pluralize the past and challenge hegemonic historiography from gendered, postcolonial, and ecological perspectives, using forms such as verbatim or memory plays, staged biographies, or enactments 'on location'. In all these different forms, playwrights and theatre practitioners do not only stage but also scrutinize and resist linear notions of history, and they address the material or environmental processes within which these temporalities unfold. Against the backdrop of these lively debates and formal experiments, the 23rd annual conference of the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE) addressed issues of history, how we tell stories about it and how notions of history have been challenged and re-assessed on Anglophone stages around the world.

The conference opened with a conversation between playwright Mark Ravenhill and Jörg Bochow, head dramaturge of the Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg. Focusing on how and to what effect theatre and drama locate history on the contemporary stage, Ravenhill vividly talked about historical events that had shaped his life and the life of his parents. Using plays like *Faust Is Dead* (1997), *Handbag* (1998) or *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001), Bochow and Ravenhill discussed the possibilities of theatre and drama to make the present talk to the past. The conversation ended with Ravenhill's impressive and haunting reading from his stage adaptation and re-writing of *Candide*, a version of Voltaire's classical novel first performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2013.

In the first keynote of the conference that followed on the next morning, Una Chaudhuri (New York University) took the route of eco-criticism to talk about how human history is put into perspective when considering large-scale events like climate change. Using Caryl Churchill's *Far Away* (2000) as a starting point, she concentrated on how tiny acts of a private nature are connected to momentous developments that affect everyone's lives. She then discussed Wallace Shawn's *Grasses of a Thousand Colors* (2009) and its disturbing play on sexual expression, human-animal relations and food, while spinning a dystopian fantasy about ecological disaster.

Following Chaudhuri's keynote, the first panel of the conference on "Fracturing History: Staging the Moment" started with Vicky Angelaki (University of Birmingham) who, focusing on Martin Crimp's *Alles Weitere kennen Sie aus dem Kino* (2013), discussed how Crimp's new version of Euripides' *The Phoenician Women* de-familiarizes the familiar and questions historical narratives. Through its focus on strong women, Crimp creates a new collective 'ourstory' in which the audience is included. Chris Megson (Royal Holloway, University of London) followed up on Angelaki and in his paper detected a new interest in religion and secular enchantment in a whole number of contemporary plays, ranging from David Hare's *Racing Demon* (1990), Richard Bean's *The Heretic* (2011) to Howard Barker's *Lot and His God* (2012) or plays like Howard Brenton's *Paul* (2005). Megson applied the idea of the postsecular to these plays, arguing

that the theatricalized postsecular imagination is both an antidote to modernism's disenchantment with the world and a means of up-ending the binary division of past and present. In the final paper of the panel, Franziska Quabeck (University of Münster) focused on the importance of individual human acts in the workings of history, using Brian Friel's *The Home Place* (2005). In contrast to abstract history, ruled by natural laws, Friel's play presents history as unpredictable and stresses the ethical responsibility of the individual as a historical agent.

In the second keynote of the conference, Amelia H. Kritzer (University of St. Thomas, Saint Paul, Minnesota) talked about "Women and Historical Agency in Contemporary British Plays". She focused on plays that discussed how historical agency is denied to women. Plays like *Happy Now?* by Lucinda Coxon (2008), *Apologia* by Alexi Kaye Campbell (2009) or the Tricycle Theatre's cycle of nine short plays on *Women, Power & Politics* (2009) call attention to the scope of women's lives and their engagement in politics, history and leadership. At the same time, these plays discuss the precarious balance between family life, public office and personal happiness.

The second panel continued this interest in agency and history. Maria Marcsek-Fuchs (University of Braunschweig) took a gendered view to history with Jessica Swale's *Blue Stockings* and its stage version for the Globe Theatre (2013). She argued that the play was not innovative in its form, but that it nevertheless created awareness of the bitter struggle for agency in its depiction of women's fight for equal rights to a university degree. John Bull (University of Reading) concentrated on Howard Brenton's imagining of British history and Brenton's project of historical 'invention' as a meeting of the 'factive' and the 'fictive'. In plays like *Anne Boleyn* (2010) or *55 Days* (2012), Brenton problematises notions of Britain and national identity. John Bull ended with a short glimpse at other authors and their views of British history, past and future, as presented in Mike Bartlett's 'future history play' *King Charles III* (2014), David Greig's *Dunsinane* (2010) and Rona Munro's trilogy of King James plays (2014). In the panel's last paper, Marie Pecorari (Paris-Sorbonne University) analysed Tony Kushner's 1996 play *Reverse Transcription: Six Playwrights Bury a Seventh*. The play outlines how literature can write back to history by re-activating obsolete ways of death and mourning. In its critique of the exclusion of artists from mainstream American society and its presentation of the AIDS epidemic, the play creates a new connection with the past.

On the evening of the conference's second day, the participants went to see *Drawing Lessons I, II and III* by William Kentridge at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg. In an impressive solo performance, Joachim Meyerhoff enacted the first three of William Kentridge's Harvard lectures. The production included original art work and films by the South African artist and touched upon topics like race and genocide, childhood memories and the politics of music and art.

Helen Gilbert (Royal Holloway, University of London) opened the third day of the conference with her keynote on "History is Broken Here: Indigenous Performance and the 'Cunning of Recognition'". She concentrated on the role that performance and theatre can play in analyses of the consequences of colonialism in Canada and Australia. In her talk, she focused on the role of photography as a technique of memory and testimony and how indigenous theatre has re-used colonial and ethnographic photography to re-tell the past. Her examples were *The Edward Curtis Project: A Modern Picture Story* (2010) by Marie Clements, the short film *A Common Experience* (2013) by Yvette Nolan and Shane Belacourt, and *Gudirr, Gudirr* (2013) by Marrugeku Company and its co-artistic director, Dalisa Pigram. As Gilbert showed, these performances challenge the idea of the 'authentic' native and his/her role in the past and present of contemporary postcolonial societies.

The third panel on "Local Perspectives – Global Historiographies" opened with Markus Wessendorf (University of Hawaii, Mānoa) and his take on terrorism and theatre. Claiming that hostage drama has been central to many contemporary stagings of terrorism, he compared Frank McGuinness' *Someone to Watch Over Me* (1992) with

David Greig's *The American Pilot* (2005). Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier (University of Hildesheim) analysed Lucy Prebble's *Enron* (2009) as docudrama and verbatim theatre. She argued that the play and its entertaining mixture of documentary, tragedy, dance, and show tunes outline the theatricality of the financial business world. However, the play is in danger of trivializing the consequences of economic scandals like that of the Enron company. Christiane Schlote (University of Zurich) followed up on these concerns with globalization. She examined Lucy Kirkwood's dramatization of the famous photograph of the 'tank man' in Tiananmen Square from June 1989. While the play criticizes the capitalist exploitation of war and war images, it still focuses on private lives, and the predominance of American scenes over Chinese scenes does not create a transnational narrative.

The fourth panel, "Transforming Cultures – Inventing Futures", started off with René Schallegger (University of Klagenfurt), who analyzed two kinds of Canadian plays which he termed 'voices of the other' on the one hand and 'personal and collective metafiction', on the other hand. Schallegger argued that authors like Kevin Loring, David Yee, Lorena Gale, David MacIvor, Timothy Findley and Guillermo Verdecchia present images of Canada and its past as deeply historical and a-historical at the same time. Janine Hauthal (University of Wuppertal) focused on "Transcultural Discourses on the Contemporary British Stage" and recent engagements with post-wall Europe. She compared David Edgar's *Pentecost* (1994), David Greig's *Europe* (1994) and Timberlake Wertenbaker's *The Break of Day* (1995). These plays adopt transnational points of view and delineate Eastern Europe as a transcultural community. In the final paper of the panel, Christopher Innes (University of Toronto) assessed Tom Stoppard's plays with regard to their ideologies of hope and the merging of past and present. In his trilogy *The Coast of Utopia* (2002) as well as in *Rock'n'Roll* (2006), Stoppard addressed the link between politics and art and the political and the personal. The plays thus ask how history is constructed and by whom and demand a utopian potential that remains open to new ideas.

The second day concluded with a lively performance by the Hamburg University Players, who presented Andrew Bovell's *Speaking in Tongues* (1996), a play about nine parallel lives and interlocking infidelities that were staged in a series of fragmented confessionals.

The final day of the conference opened with a workshop on eco-drama by Catherine Diamond (Soochow University, Taiwan), director of the Kinnari Ecological Theatre Project in Southeast Asia. She presented the methods and performances of Kinnari and its goals of addressing ecological problems via a staging of popular myths, song and dance. The participants in the conference workshop then discussed ecological problems that were relevant to their own local environments and connected these issues with a reworking of Grimm's fairy tale "Snow White".

After this stimulating workshop, the fifth panel, on "Truth and Action – History and Performance", concluded the conference. Janina Wierzoch (University of Hamburg) discussed plays that address the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and focused on Owen Sheers' *The Two Worlds of Charlie F.* (2012) and Roy Williams' *Days of Significance* (2007). The plays present how war disrupts and distorts history by staging personal temporalities and their often violent shifts and frictions. Felix Sprang (Humboldt University Berlin) then concentrated on performance theatre and two companies - Forced Entertainment and Needcompany. Taking the concept of failure as his central starting point, he argued that performances like *The Coming Storm* (2012) or *The Last Adventures* (2013) by Forced Entertainment create a 'poetics of failure' that help the audience to rethink notions of history, linearity and the well-made play. The final paper by Trish Reid (Kingston University London) offered an analysis of the experimental piece *Paul Bright's Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (2013) by Untitled Projects, which poses as an exhibition and documentation about the playwright Paul Bright. The play thus

deconstructs representational practices and plays with unreliability and the forms of documentary theatre as well as with its ideas of authenticity.

All in all, the 23rd annual conference of the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English showed the impressive breadth and lively debate surrounding issues of history and its transformations on contemporary Anglophone stages around the globe.

(Selected papers of the conference will be published in *JCDE: Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, vol. 3.1, 2015.)

REVIEWS

Marina Dossena and Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti (eds.) 2012. *Letter Writing in Late Modern Europe*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 254 pp., ISBN 978 90 272 5623 2.

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As the editors of this volume point out, correspondence has been regarded as occupying a place at the “intersection of spoken and written discourse”, bridging “gaps between prescription and real language use” (3). The new and refreshing perspective of the volume at hand is its cross-linguistic view, bringing together scholars of six European languages: Dutch, English, Finnish, German, Italian, and Portuguese. While each language has its own history, there are many commonalities that can be found in letter writing practices. Besides the introduction, this well-edited volume consists of twelve papers, starting with a thoughtful overview by Marina Dossena of the study of correspondence, focusing on relevant theoretical and methodological issues. In it, she discusses the insights gained while working on the *Corpus of Nineteenth-century Scottish Correspondence*, from obtaining sources to dealing with manuscript data. Dossena stresses the importance of using a variety of sources for both letters and information on the writers, recommending familiarity with historians’ work.

Another paper focusing on corpus perspectives is by Rita Marquilhas, presenting the digital archive of Portuguese private correspondence, ranging from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The problems of sorting and annotating surviving data into searchable electronic form are similar regardless of language, as Marquilhas clearly demonstrates. Besides the usual civil courts, Inquisition lawsuits are a particularly fruitful source of letters in Portugal. The advantage of using data associated with legal cases brings the added benefit of socio-historical background information concerning the authors. Marquilhas goes on to discuss some results obtained through analysis of the corpus, focusing on the traditional rhetorical structure of letters (*Ars Dictaminis*).

Stephan Elspaß discusses a database of nineteenth-century emigrant and soldier letters, representing the lower strata of society. He also makes a cross-linguistic comparison of his German data with English, Danish and Dutch letters. The role of formulaic language, i.e. that of various types of pre-fabricated linguistic chunks, is one of the main foci of his study, which offers a convincing description of the process whereby partially schooled writers create their letters, a theme which is echoed in several other papers in the volume. Lea Laitinen and Taru Nordlund in particular bring a fascinating parallel view of similar practices found in the emigrant letters of late-nineteenth-century Finns. Besides formulaic language, the authors also identify a group style typical of self-taught writers of the network they are studying. Laitinen and Nordlund complement their study with a comparison between learned and unlearned Finnish contemporaries.

A different perspective on letters is adopted by Eleonora Chiavetta, as she analyses the correspondence of one English sister–brother dyad in the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The focus is on gender, education and the maintenance of the familial relationship. Here, the writer’s identity is shown to shift in relation to her geographic location. The greater the distance between correspondents, the more important is the metadiscourse of tracking the course of correspondence.

While it is common to regard specifically private correspondence as a space for identity construction, Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti shows in her study of nineteenth-century commercial correspondence how the subjective presence of writers as identified through self-mention also plays an important role in letters falling “between the public and the private sphere”. Another genre of correspondence combining the official and private are the English and Italian diplomatic newsletters studied by Nicholas Brownlees. The cross-linguistic approach adopted here, looking at the similarities and differences in the macrostructure of correspondence written home by envoys abroad, highlights one of the major advantages of volumes like this: a discovery of commonalities in Late Modern European letters, regardless of language.

A corpus combining both private and commercial letters, *Letters as Loot*, provides yet more evidence for the link between formulaic language use and poor educational opportunities. In the study by Marijke van der Wal, Gijsbert Rutten and Tanja Simons, the classification of epistolary formulae into text-constitutive, intersubjective and Christian-ritual allows for a quantificational analysis of formulaic language, and provides evidence for “a direct link between writing experience and the use of formulae” (158). Further perspectives of semiliterates abroad are brought by Robert McColl Millar, who shows that there seems to have been a marked difference between spoken dialect and written non-standard. Unlearned writers seem to have had “a developed sense of what was ‘correct’ and ‘proper’” (176), and their writing strives toward that goal. A more traditional corpus-based study is provided by Kevin McCafferty and Carolina P. Amador Moreno, on modal auxiliaries *shall* and *will* in Irish English. They propose that the development observed in the data may be linked to increasing literacy among the lower strata of society, suggesting colloquialisation or vernacularisation.

The volume is rounded up by two papers focusing on literacy and letter writing instruction. Tony Fairman looks at the use of “schooled” and “unschooled” vocabulary in eighteen letters. While Fairman’s point about the importance of not ignoring non-standard forms of writing in favour of standard language is important, it seems oddly placed in a volume which embraces the writing of the semiliterate in such a versatile manner. His discussion of the socialisation of literacies (210), on the other hand, resonates well with the other papers in the volume. Finally, Linda C. Mitchell describes how letter writing was used as a writing exercise in schools, in order to teach points of grammar and literature, as well as general communication skills.

One element possibly confusing for readers is the varied use of terminology referring to the different participants in the process of writing letters. Dossena (pp. 18–21) presents an overview of the terminology used when there were multiple people involved in the production of a letter. The scholars whose work is included in the volume use terms variously, and differentiate different possible layers and divisions of labour in creating a single letter. So, for example, the *encoder* of a letter can be either the person whose message is conveyed (Dossena; called *sender* by van der Wal et al. and *source* by Fairman) or the person who actually wrote the letter as a professional task (van der Wal et al.; called also a *scribe* or *composer* or *writer* by various scholars). While Dossena’s overview is helpful, some more reference to the differing taxonomies in other papers as well as cross references would have been helpful.

Indeed, this wealth of studies on different languages in one volume could have provided even more insight into commonalities and differences between letter writing practices in different regions, if there had been more overt dialogue between papers. While the editors hope that the volume would “present a highly cohesive set of

contributions” (6), this hope is only partially fulfilled. The cohesion can be discovered between the lines, but more consistent cross referencing would have helped at least the more casual reader. It is perhaps no surprise that members of the elite, such as diplomats, write in a comparable manner due to their education and contact with each other. What is less expected is the strong resemblance of the letters by uneducated or semi-literate writers, regardless of language. Many of them did not receive any formal training in writing letters, yet they independently show similar practices in their letters, particularly with regard to formulaic language. This seems to open up new vistas of basicness in communicative practices, suggesting that certain types of style shifting towards perceived prestige forms of language may be integral in the written communication of people living their daily lives in an overwhelmingly oral environment.

Piller, Ingrid. *Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011, 197 pages, ISBN: 978 0 7486 3283 1 (HB), 978 0 7486 3284 8 (paperback).

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Ingrid Piller’s insightful foray into the field of intercultural communication studies is structured around one fundamental, though previously underexplored, research question: “who makes culture relevant to whom in which context and for which purposes” (5). Within the frame of critical sociolinguistic ethnography, the author proceeds to interrogate traditional approaches to the study of intercultural communication, and to deconstruct essentialist notions of culture, cultural difference, and identity. The book convincingly argues for the analysis of intercultural communication “as a social practice in motion” (174), predicated on the view that culture is a discursive construct: it is produced in the course of being differently drawn upon and performed, in particular contexts, by social actors who are differently situated in terms of class, race, ethnicity, access to education and other resources. By proposing this approach, Ingrid Piller aims to reinstate intercultural communication as “a meaningful [research] concept” (72) against the contemporary background of global flows and transnational practices, and to raise awareness of the need for “writing social justice into intercultural communication” (175).

The theoretical premises that ground the author’s principal claims are laid out in the first part of the book (Chapters 2-5). Chapter 2 sheds light on the diverse uses of the terms “cross-cultural communication”, “intercultural communication” and “inter-discourse communication”, and their implications for intercultural communication studies. It introduces the distinction between “culture as an entity” and “culture as a process”, and sets the frame of discussion for the following chapters by taking a critical distance from the former. Accordingly, Chapter 3 dwells upon the historical, economic and socio-political contexts that gave rise to particular conceptualizations of culture and cultural difference. In the UK and the US, the concept of culture emerged during nineteenth-century colonialism, followed by early-twentieth century globalization. Through an evolutionary lens, anthropological research provided at the time a “moral justification” for the colonial drive to impose, by assimilation, the “superior” European and North American cultures to the rest of the world, a view that still informs constructions of cultural difference in racist discourses (21-22). A non-evolutionary understanding of culture, celebratory of cultural diversity, took shape in American anthropology in the 1940s, and found expression in the concept of multiculturalism. It gained currency in the next decades, under the impact of decolonisation, the civil rights movement, and the rise of identity politics. Intercultural communication shares with multiculturalism a similar perspective on cultural diversity and, to an extent, the historical

and political context of emergence, but expanded at an international level. The reconfiguration of international and commercial relations among nation-states in the wake of World War II, and especially during the Cold War, aroused a pragmatic interest in intercultural communication research, seen as a means to understand other cultures in order to derive a military or business advantage (“competition”) or to bridge potential conflicts (“cooperation”). The chapter aptly examines the contexts in which “culture and cultural differences were talked into existence” (33) and mobilized as strategic resources, therefore also pointing to the power relations in which they are enmeshed.

Shifting from culture to language, Chapter 4 establishes the importance of the principle of linguistic relativity, rooted in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, in acknowledging unfamiliar worldviews, “encoded” in languages other than one’s own. The connected concept of communicative relativity, concerned with the functions of language, provides a solid basis for understanding the ways in which social actors make distinct use of language in a multitude of situations, including from unequal positions. Ingrid Piller takes issue with a fallacious application of linguistic relativity in intercultural communication studies, manifested in “the direct relationship [instituted] between language X and culture X” (46). What underlies this relationship is the misguided assumption that there is a one-to-one correspondence between “official languages” and “national cultures”, an interpretation that makes intercultural communication studies “complicit in naturalising a particular version of a language, the so-called standard, as **the** language” (49). This argument is resumed from yet another angle in Chapter 5. Here Piller perceptively turns to Michael Billig’s notion of “banal nationalism” to demonstrate how an important section of intercultural communication research contributes, in particular through the national stereotypes that populate its advice literature, to reinforcing national identity and (re)enacting the nation in everyday practices. This chapter gives a clear contour to one of the main critical undertakings in the book: to destabilize the nation as an analytical category in intercultural communication studies, a goal that echoes, for the researchers of transnationalism, Wimmer and Glick Schiller’s objections to the taken-for-grantedness of the nation-state in social sciences scholarship (2003). The global and transnational processes, argues Piller, have already exposed the inadequacy of a unit of analysis that equates culture as a reified, homogeneous entity with the nation. Another critical objective pursued by the author is to bring to surface social inequalities and injustice, as well as the role of other factors in intercultural encounters (language proficiency, situated knowledge), often obscured in explanations exclusively based on culture. This is tackled at length in the second, more empirically-oriented, part of the book, where the author looks into how social actors “make culture relevant” in a number of different contexts and practices. The case studies presented, compelling and up-to-date, cover ground from a wealth of disciplines, and employ methods from discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and critical ethnography.

Chapter 6 explores the field of intercultural business communication, showing the changes in framing and methodology triggered by different views of who the agents of globalization are: nation-states, corporations or individuals. Just as in the case of intercultural communication studies, Piller emphasizes the problems inherent in the founding idea that “the nation is the locus of cultural difference” (77), still influential in business communication, and advocates instead an “interdisciplinary, context-sensitive and complex” approach to a practice “in motion” (94). The last sections of the chapter discuss the central place of “linguistic and cultural capital” in a knowledge-based global economy, where employees increasingly have to do “language work” (88). From a political economy perspective, language skills are an asset to be put in the service of corporations, a process that requires workers to assume and perform new identities, in conformity with hegemonic language ideologies, and often leads to their deskilling.

The commodification of intercultural communication in advertising discourse is tackled critically in chapter 7. The loanwords and borrowings routinely inserted in advertisements presuppose, notes Piller, a transfer from language to culture, which allows

them to function as emblems of cultural values stereotypically associated with nations. The use of English in consumer discourse reflects its status as “the hypercentral language of globalisation”, its presence invoking “a social stereotype of modernity, global elitism and the free market” rather than an ethno-cultural stereotype (101). Inspired by George Ritzer’s interpretation of global consumerism as a source of “non-” entities and processes, Piller coins the term “non-language” to illustrate the transformation of multilingualism into a mere ingredient in the expansion of neoliberal markets.

In chapter 8, the author examines the discursive construction of intercultural romance, taking readers to another realm of intercultural communication. Discourses of “the desirable cultural other” have become embodied in the emotional lives of people and are increasingly performed by couples in the context of intensified transnational mobility. Not only do they reproduce gendered cultural stereotypes, for example of exotic femininity, but they also maintain and strengthen the global system in which they are entrenched, with ideologies and material inequalities that remain invisible behind the romanticised views of the cultural other. “The global circuits of love” (117), Piller points out, often set in motion human trafficking and abuse, but at the same time “displace inequality onto culture” (125), as can be noticed in the discourse of mail-order bride websites. The strategic role of discourses of cultural difference and language proficiency in the exclusion of migrants is critically examined in Chapter 9, where “talk about culture” is unmasked as racism (129) and the “objective assessment” of language knowledge as an instrument of exploitation and unfair employment practices. Such strategies can be partly explained, according to Piller, as a result of a decoupling of language policies from industrial policies and the existing conditions on the labour market. Chapter 10 goes on to look at multilingualism and linguistic choice in intercultural communication as “a form of social practice [...] embedded in language ideologies and the political economy of language” (168). Using examples from interactional sociolinguistics, Piller reaffirms the importance of analyzing natural language in real, complex human interactions, “lest we mistake language problems for cultural problems” (157). In the final section of the chapter, she returns to the political economy of language and reveals, from a critical perspective, the part played by language policies and language marketing ideologies in the choices that speakers enact in practice, often unconsciously, and the prestige they attach to certain accents or language varieties.

Overall, the book succeeds in putting forward a coherent, well-grounded and amply supported argument to the scholars of intercultural communication. The proposed theoretical and methodological approach is grounded in discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, with a critical orientation aimed at pinpointing social and economic inequalities under the guise of cultural difference. The problematization of culture as a discursive construction opens up new research paths in the field, better suited to deal with the transnational and global dynamics. The book, however, is equally successful in addressing a much wider audience. Its clear structure, the comprehensive literature reviews, the stimulating activities at the end of each chapter, and the accessible writing style make it an excellent working tool for teachers and students of intercultural communication and not only. The concepts and methods drawn from an impressive number of adjacent fields, as well as the extremely varied case studies, are of great interest to specialists from a range of disciplines (business communication, cultural studies, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, migration studies, gender studies, language policy). Not least, due to the compelling examples and critical reflection on highly relevant contemporary practices, *Intercultural Communication* is a thought-provoking read for non-specialists.

References

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Tom Bartlett. 2014. *Analysing Power in Language: A practical guide*. London / New York: Routledge, 212 pp., ISBN 978-0-415-66630-5.

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Analysing Power in Language by Tom Bartlett is a practical guide for all those who are interested in exploring language use in a social context, as well as the process of analysing the construction, interpretation and consumption of texts. Although the guide is primarily intended for scholars in linguistics, it offers an insight into language structures and discourse structuring useful for most fields in the humanities. The seven sections of the guide not only present various methods and a range of analytical techniques for analysing texts and discourse, but also include exercises, questions and excerpts intended to help the reader practise and test the topics discussed in each respective section. Answer keys are also provided at the end of the book.

The first section of the book comes as an introductory part to various aspects related to and interwoven with language, such as the grammatical, textual, contextual, discursive, social and cultural factors within the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The perspective that Bartlett uses in his book is therefore that of a functional approach, “which sees grammar as a *meaning potential* (Halliday 1978:39), as a set of options for expressing ourselves in different ways that has developed to meet our expanding communicative needs” (5). Some of the key concepts used in this book, namely text, lexicogrammar, cotext, context, environment, (multimodal) meaning or semiotics, are also recapped in some detail in this section in order to familiarize the reader with these common terms. The last part of the first section is a brief introduction to the concept of positioning and its relation to power through language use in real practice. This has been finely instantiated with a real text.

The second section looks at how speakers construe a field of discourse, the way they choose specific language structures to interconnect people, things or events related to a coherent topic of discussion or ongoing activity. Bartlett discusses in detail the difference between *immediate* and *displaced environments* and how they can be construed in the field of discourse, and exemplifies the distinction quite clearly through a number of practical texts intended to facilitate the comprehension of these concepts and to make the reader think critically and creatively. The last part of the section deals with two important linguistic aspects, *reference* and *motifs*, which enable the “weaving together of individual strands into a single piece” (17) of text. Both of them are explored and discussed through concrete illustrations extracted from a text to show how these devices make it possible for the interlocutors to move from one environment to another and how to manipulate discourse in order to establish interpersonal relations and particular discourse positioning.

In the third section of the book Bartlett focuses on *transitivity*, the relationship that is established between discourse participants within a process and how they are depicted or represented. Based on the work of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the author discusses the system of process types, which comprises material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural, and existential processes. These processes, participants’ roles and additional circumstantial elements are demonstrated through various examples. Also, grammatical probes, which involve rephrasing examples using agnate clauses, are used to test for verb process types and can be considered supplementary to the understanding and appreciation of transitivity when analysing discourse. The author makes a thorough transitivity analysis of a full text and extends his discussion with practical examples in the second and last part of this third section of the book. The analysis and discussion help the reader to carefully see how discourse participants can construe their participation in discourse, how they can position themselves in discourse and how particular positioning “can work in tandem with features of the situational and social environment to make discourse effective and powerful” (45).

Issues related to interpersonal meaning and interaction are dealt with in the fourth section. Here Bartlett concentrates on four important ways in which interpersonal meaning is construed in discourse. First, he discusses the *speech roles* adopted by speakers in discourse and the linguistic activities they are engaged in. Following Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 107-108), the author concisely describes the four terms related to the speech roles – statement, offer, question, and request – as semantic categories realized by intonation and lexicogrammatical features. Apart from the speech roles, *mood* is also considered an important aspect that construes discourse and represents speakers, in a certain way expressing their positioning. Secondly, the author considers the level of certainty which speakers attribute to statements and evidentiality referring to “the nature of the evidence supporting a proposition” (112). Both of them are very often useful linguistic tools available to speakers to determine their personal positions in discourse. Thirdly, Bartlett deals with aspects of possibility and necessity assigned to discourse events. Deontic modality, epistemic modality and hedging are defined and illustrated in various situations to show how they can also be employed to enable interpersonal meanings. And finally, different standards of evaluation that speakers use to appraise are examined and instantiated in relation to the construction of interpersonal meaning in the realm of discourse analysis. Taken together, all these linguistic resources enable the speaker’s role and positing in interactions and present subjective assessments and evaluations of the topics discussed.

The fifth section focuses on texts, their cohesive and coherent organization as well as the linguistic resources which enable textual meanings produced in them. These linguistic resources display textual metafunctions to interweave various aspects of texts in specific times and places. The main concern here is to explore “the thematic organization of the clause and the development of these thematic elements as the text progresses” (131). The author defines and illustrates two important elements of the clause: Theme and Rheme. Issues related to interpersonal and textual meanings as well as interpersonal and textual Themes are also discussed briefly in this section, before dealing with one of the most relevant aspects of thematic progression and its methods of development. A worked text at the end of the section illustrates and comments on the ideas introduced here, and explores how textual metafunctions and thematicity potentially allow speakers to position themselves in relation to different (extra)linguistic factors.

In the last two sections of the book, Bartlett looks at some indispensable aspects of discourse complementing those discursive elements, resources and features discussed in the rest of this practical guide. A “more finegrained distinction than the notions of immediate and displaced context” has been provided through the introduction of Rhetorical Units, the interrelation between parts of a text and “the deictic centre of speaker and hearer at the time of speaking” (168). The author’s intention in the last section is to put together and analyse at the same time the different types of meaning in a text and to show how field, tenor, and mode interact simultaneously to facilitate the construction and interpretation of texts in discourse analysis. In this last part of the book the author also introduces some additional key concepts meant to take the reader a bit further into the investigation of the complex process of analysing discourse and identifying the voice of the speaker and the power he or she can exercise in social life through language. This guide also includes a glossary, defining or explaining most of the key terms, notions or concepts used, and the index at the end is a further resource enabling the reader to locate relevant topics in the text easily.

The present book offers some of the most common, useful and efficient analytical techniques which can be employed to explore a text and analyse discourse or discourses related to it. The range of linguistic devices, notions and aspects investigated here not only enable novice discourse analysts to appreciate power in language, but also to understand how and why speakers attempt to position themselves in a certain way in relation to people, time, place, aims or social identity, among other things, in “an ever-changing social world” (181). It could be argued that the analysing framework presented

in this book can be adopted for a range of texts and genres, thus making it more practicable for all those who share different interests across different disciplines. The book can also be used as a supplementary one to others dealing with (critical) discourse analysis to obtain a better insight into language and all its magic features.

Ken Hyland, Chau Meng Huat and Michael Handford (eds.) 2013. *Corpus Applications in Applied Linguistics*. London & New York: Bloomsbury, 260 pp., ISBN 978-1-4725-2486-7.

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This volume tries to capture the most intriguing developments brought by corpus research to applied linguistics; it covers a wide variety of fields, from academic and professional discourse, through forensic, gender and media studies, to second language acquisition, and from English as a lingua franca to more novel research niches, such as documentary photography. The main purpose of the book is to show not only the relevance but also the array of studies and approaches that can be carried out with corpus research.

Some of the multifaceted contexts covered by Corpus Linguistics (CL) are dealt with in an introduction, thirteen chapters and an afterword, organised in five different sections: (i) Corpora in Applied Linguistics, (ii) Corpora and institutional use of language, (iii) Corpora and Applied Linguistics domains, (iv) Corpora in new spheres of study and (v) Corpora, Language learning and pedagogy. The chapters contained in each section deal with a specific topic and each “presents a synthesis of both past and current research on the topic” (4).

(i) Corpora in Applied Linguistics

The first section contains the *Introduction*, which is also a welcome to the reader. It is well elaborated and guides the reader through the book by introducing the audience to the topic dealt with in it, at the same time providing a good synopsis of its chapters.

(ii) Corpora and institutional use of language

Michael Handford’s contribution, “Professional Communication and Corpus Linguistics”, opens the first section of the volume, devoted to the relationship between corpora and institutional language use, and shows how corpora can contribute to pedagogy and training research in professional contexts. Drawing from an ongoing research project, the author shows how CL can be used to develop educational materials, thus supporting “Firth’s (2009) call for more corpora of authentic professional international communication” (26).

Ken Hyland’s chapter, “Corpora and Academic Discourse”, reveals how corpus studies have contributed to a better understanding of academic discourse across disciplines, genres and languages, both in oral and written styles. An illustrative example is given, indicating how CL may reveal the extent to which evaluative features in book reviews are influenced by gender and discipline. Corpus studies, in short, underlines the importance corpora have for Academic Discourse in terms of informing EAP course design and teaching.

In “Corpora and Workplace Discourse”, Almut Koester explores the characteristics of workplace discourse occurring in professional and institutional contexts, where the author shows how language use in the workplace exhibits lexico-grammar as well as pragmatic features, which make it distinct from everyday discourse. Furthermore, data reveal that the interpersonal dimension, ranging from social to intimate interaction, depends on power differences which influence, maintain and reinforce politeness strategies.

(iii) Corpora in Applied Linguistics domains

The third section opens with a chapter by Sara Laviosa, “Corpora and Translation Studies”, in which the author traces the development of corpus use in translation studies from its advent in the early 1990s to the present day. After explaining corpus methods in translation studies, and how corpus studies of translation have contributed to the development of Descriptive Translation Studies, the author claims that, with the turn of the millennium, the concerns of descriptive corpus studies of translation have varied considerably. Laviosa then concludes by predicting possible ways in which corpora may influence translation studies in teaching and practice contexts.

John Olsson’s contribution, “Some Aspects of the Use of Corpora in Forensic Linguistics”, gives instances of how CL can be used in forensic contexts. A first pioneering example is given by illustrating the work of Coulthard (1994) in the Derek Bentley case. He also comments on the fact that, nowadays, thanks to the possibility of using ever larger corpora (Google included), meaningful searches are possible in forensic authorship inquiries, thus helping scholars to “understand the extent to which idiolect may play a role in authorship identification” (97).

“Corpora and Gender Studies” by Paul Baker offers an instantiation of the way in which gender studies can be approached by CL. In particular, Paul Baker shows through corpora how (a) language is *gendered*, and (b) how gender is *represented*. In the first case, for instance, Baker claims that, when describing different uses of language, scholars revert to previous research, “charting ways that the sexes supposedly differed, with an initial focus on the ways by which males dominated females” (100). As to (b), Baker takes into consideration some terms, such as, amongst others, *bachelor*, *spinster*, and *metrosexual*. In conclusion, while being critically aware of potential problems that CL may introduce, Baker is nevertheless conscious of the great potentialities CL has for gender research.

Anne O’Keeffe’s chapter, “Corpora and Media Studies”, surveys the applications of CL in media discourse, which are exemplified with the analysis of a word frequency list, keyword and concordance list, generated by a corpus formed from a *BBC 1 Panorama* interview by Martin Bashir with Diana, Princess of Wales, and several other corpora. The investigation shows how CL can be a powerful tool which provides quantitative data in any investigation whose qualitative interpretation is up to the analysts.

(iv) *Corpora in new spheres of study*

The fourth section opens with a chapter by Barbara Seidlhofer, “Corpora and English as a Lingua Franca”. The study English as a lingua franca (ELF) is promoted by such corpora as VOICE (the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English*) and ELFA (the Helsinki-based corpus of *English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings*). The author first describes methodological challenges and limitations in ELF corpora constructions, with particular attention paid to VOICE, and then suggests implications for CL future research and practice in ELF.

Caroline Tagg’s contribution, “Texting and Corpora”, illustrates the impact of text messaging on communication and shows how corpus research can contribute to the analysis of computer-mediated communication in general. After presenting an overview of text message corpora, the author takes into consideration the issue of (re)spelling in text messaging, which evidences how language can be used in a creative way, despite font and number constraints. There are of course challenges, such as message research and length, corpus downloading and processing, corpus size, as well as issues created by the increasing use of social network sites, but, at the same time, such corpora offer a great deal to computer-mediated communication research.

The last chapter in this section is a contribution by Gu Yueguo, “A Conceptual Model for Segmenting and Annotating a Documentary Photograph Corpus (DPC)”. This is indeed a new research area in the field as it investigates image corpora. Satellite images, CT, fMRI images, meteorological images, traffic surveillance images, CTV images and news-agency images, though commonly available in everyday life and normally received or sent by mobile phones, iPads or PDAs, are undervalued in applied

linguistics. The author, therefore, presents a model for segmenting and annotating an image corpus and reveals the potential benefits for both teachers and learners, from vocabulary learning enhancement to classroom implementation tasks (such as motivation in discussion groups or written assignments, and/or preparations for illustrated textbooks).

(v) *Corpora, Language learning and pedagogy*

The final section of the volume consists of three chapters. The first one, “Corpora, Language Learning and Pedagogy” by Chau Meng Huat, puts emphasis on learner corpora for second language acquisition and on the challenges to take into consideration for further meaningful research and practice. In particular, Chau observes how, for instance, such recent and sophisticated corpora as CHILDES, CQPweb, GOLD and the Sketch Engine have been helping researchers to develop an SLA model, which has unveiled some key processes underlying L2 development.

The second contribution to the last section is “Corpora in the Classroom: an Applied Linguistic Perspective”, by Lynne Flowerdew. After reviewing corpus-based pedagogies in the applied linguistic literature, Flowerdew focuses on the direct applications corpora may have in the classroom. In the second part of her chapter, Flowerdew shows how corpora and Data Driven Learning (DDL) can be provide L2 students with those precise strategies and skills which are normally embodied in all SLA, sociocultural and constructivist theories of learning. Her hope is that future synergies between applied linguistics and corpus pedagogy may continue, given the benefits students can draw from DDL.

The final chapter of the volume, “Corpora and Material Design” by Michael McCarthy and Jeanne McCarten, shows how attitudes to developments in corpus compilation and analysis facilitating the creation of corpus-informed English language courses have changed in the first decade of this century. In particular, the authors illustrate one project, *Touchstone*, a four-level course of North American English for adults, and explain how spoken corpus evidence can be transformed into a fully corpus-informed syllabus through a mediation process, which, far from being simple, is indeed rewarding and can lead to innovative and productive teaching materials.

The “Afterword” by Susan Hunston seeks to draw together the different issues put forward in the thirteen chapters. She explains how the volume illustrates the wide variety of topics that comes under the heading of Applied Linguistics, including language teaching, language translation, forensic linguistic gender and media studies, L2, computer-mediated communication and ELF, in short, written or spoken texts and their contexts, which, thanks to corpus studies, are reinterpreted and bring scholars to a novel interpretation of Applied Linguistics itself, whose role “may be to expand opportunities for understanding and intervening in a world construed and reflected in language” (242).

The different chapters of the volume strongly communicate the diversity of topics that CL can be applied to. Indeed, the authors do not speak as a group, but rather draw together various themes, which, as a refrain, reveal that CL, together with other methodological approaches, plays a fundamental role within applied linguistic research. The use of large corpora, with the aid of computer software, allows scholars to identify language patterns which would otherwise remain hidden from human view. As Hunston points out in her “Afterword”, applied linguistics is at the service of those solving real-world problems (242) and, indeed, each chapter shows how using corpora can assist in reaching that goal. Readers will find many interesting suggestions and ideas for future study and research, even though the specific focus of some chapters may be outside their usual interests.

Overall, however, the volume offers the reader a good overview of corpus studies in applied linguistics, painting an accurate picture of the discipline. Its reader comes away with a much better understanding of current topics and issues, in both applied linguistics and corpus studies, and as a result is well prepared to ask appropriate questions concerning the numerous areas that CL addresses.