
SUMMER COURSE REPORT

“Training, Translation and Tourism in Venice”, Venice, Italy, 5-19 July 2014
EU Erasmus Intensive Programme Report

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A mysterious city on water, Venice has always been one of the most attractive cultural and touristic destinations in Europe. It has widely preoccupied Western imagination, which can be seen in many literary and visual artworks, from William Shakespeare and Thomas Mann to J. M. William Turner or Antonio Lucio Vivaldi. “Training, Translation and Tourism in Venice,” a two-week project of the EU Erasmus Intensive Programme that took place from 5th to 19th of July 2014 in Venice, was equally meant to spread and revise the cultural myth of this Venetian space. The summer course was coordinated by Milan State University (Italy), in partnership with the University of Warwick in Coventry (United Kingdom), the University of Szeged (Hungary), and the University of Venice Ca’ Foscari (Italy).

The aim of this multidisciplinary programme was to make sense of Venice’s unique multi-layered environment. Accordingly, the teaching staff that consisted of internationally recognized scholars attempted to highlight Venice on page and on screen in the context of multilingualism; within the frame of translation itself as a means of cross-cultural encounters; and as a site of identity (re)constructions of contemporary Venetian locals and nomadic tourists alike. English was the common language of the twenty-two participating instructors and the twenty-four students from four universities, but they altogether had dozens of nationalities and native languages through which the programme, relying on their close cooperation, managed to break down the hegemony of English. In light of this, alternative passages between languages – in the case of untranslatable terms and contexts – were always in the foreground of the lectures. Languages and dialects not spoken by participants, such as Venetian, were also introduced and used during the varied exercises and workshops. While the lectures and workshops were held in Warwick’s Venice Centre, Palazzo Pesaro Papafava, the Intensive Programme also offered a few guided tours to lesser known areas of the city and the lagoon, including the multilingual Ghetto and the cultic bookshop of Libreria Acqua Alta, run by Luigi Frizzo.

With my apologies for not being exhaustive, I would like to give the reader a brief summary of the programme. The themes of a few fairly theory-oriented lectures ranged from the representation of translation and of the translator in Anglo-American cinema and theatre (Mariacristina Cavecchi, Milan State University), and the cultural and national significance of the translator, of maps, and of multilingualism across the Mediterranean (Loredana Polezzi, University of Warwick), to literary translation from a gendered point of view (Eliana Maestri, University of Warwick), and sharing personal experiences of translation and editing as a profession with the students (Maureen Freely, University of Warwick, an author, journalist, and translator). The practice-oriented lectures that constituted the greater part of the programme served to prepare students to perform their tasks and exercises. After translation had been examined within the frames of language philosophical investigations (Anna Kérchy, University of Szeged, Hungary), students had to translate “Jabberwocky” (1871), a nonsense poem by Lewis Carroll, into their native languages. Following discussions on the methodology of ethnographic interviewing (with Erzsébet Barát, University of Szeged), students were ready to interview people from the local community in the San Pietro area of Venice and tourists in San Marco Square and Rialto. Having examined media literacy as well as the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage through digital humanities (with

Larisa Kocic-Zámbó, University of Szeged), students were able to write daily diary entries (blogs) on their experience. Last but not least, thanks to discussions on staging techniques of multilingual short plays (Margaret Rose, the Erasmus coordinator, Milan State University, and Paolo Puppa, Venice's Ca' Foscari University), the group successfully performed their self-invented shows in Teatro Santa Marta on the last day of the programme. They were also encouraged to make group portfolios containing photographic and creative writing material. The results are available at the service of an extended online learning community on the programme's website at http://gender.ieas-szeged.hu/venice_erasmus.html.

Outstanding artists were also invited to participate in the programme. There was a master class on verbal and body language in the theatrical genre of comedy with Adriano Iurissich, actor, director and teacher in Italy, Spain, England, and Israel. Tiziano Scarpa, a novelist, poet, essayist and dramatist, discussed his representations of Venice in some of his works. Giampaolo Seguso, poet and descendant of an ancient glass-maker family on Murano, presented his bilingual book of poetry, "My Page is Glass" (2008), and invited students to talk about its various translations into different languages.

The most rewarding part of the programme was the creation of a cohesive community made up of a multinational student group. Owing to the resulting ease, trust and cooperation among the members of the group, the multilingual theatrical sketches created and compiled by these enthusiastic amateurs proved to be an interesting reflection on the multi-layered spatial and cultural marvel of Venice.

REVIEWS

David Machin and Andrea Mayr 2012. *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis. A Multimodal Introduction*. London: Sage, 240 pp., ISBN 978-0-85702-892-1.

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As indicated in the subtitle, the new book by David Machin and Andrea Mayr offers a multimodal introduction to a discipline that has enjoyed a rapid development over the last couple of decades. While critical discourse analysis has certainly achieved a strong position in modern linguistics and proves to be very popular with students, its methodology is relatively less known among media and cultural studies scholars. The book by Machin and Mayr explicitly aims to address this imbalance by targeting the latter audience. Nevertheless, it will also be of use to linguists, as well as scholars in other disciplines of the humanities.

In the Introduction, the authors briefly contextualize their approach by outlining the development of the discipline from its formative beginnings as 'critical linguistics' in the 1970s, via the various research strands and traditions of 'critical discourse analysis' emerging in the 1990s, up to the more recent 'multimodal critical discourse analysis'. The authors argue for the multimodal approach by pointing out that since other semiotic modes, particularly images, significantly complement or even contradict the linguistic component of texts, they have to be systematically analysed as well. The critical aspect of their methodology underlies an attempt to understand meanings and ideologies that are hidden and not immediately apparent to readers; as the authors specify, "Texts will use linguistics and visual strategies that appear normal or neutral on the surface, but which may in fact be ideological and seek to shape the representation of events and persons for particular ends" (9).

The book is logically structured into eight chapters which acquaint the readers straightforwardly with the basic concepts and analytical tools of CDA. In each chapter, the verbal component is discussed first, followed by the application of the relevant theory in the

area of visual communication. It is, of course, nothing new that visual communication has a highly systematic nature – after all, professionals such as photographers and film makers need to learn the conventions of the genre, since these form some of the most basic tools of their trade. In this book, however, students of media and cultural studies become exposed to the visual aspects of communication via the conceptual and methodological framework of CDA, which is largely text-based and derives from Halliday's theory of social semiotics (1985). The mapping of the parallels between the verbal and the visual modes is, indeed, one of the most exciting aspects of the whole textbook.

Chapter 1 lays out the social semiotic conception of the theory of communication where language is seen as a set of resources with particular affordances (meaning potentials) that are conventionally recognized and used by individual communicators. As in visual communication, the visual elements are not merely representative of the world, but constitutive of reality. Thus, they not only shape and maintain a society's ideologies, but “can also serve to create, maintain and legitimise certain kinds of social practices” (19).

Chapter 2 begins documenting the semiotic choices available to individuals and the impact which their selections have with respect to underlying beliefs (ideologies). On the lexical level, attention is paid to connotation, overlexicalization, lexical absence (suppression), structural oppositions, and genre choice. The discussion of visual semiotic choices includes denotation and connotation of images (iconography), attributes, settings, and salience. The verbal and visual modes can foreground, background, suppress, connote and symbolize certain meanings, with identities and actions often not being overtly indicated or stated. That is the case particularly in visual communication, since it “tends to be more open to interpretation, which gives the author some degree of manoeuvre not permitted through language use” (31).

Chapter 3 is devoted to the presentation of speech, providing a detailed taxonomy of quoting verbs and their meaning potentials. It is through such relatively simple word choices that recipients' perceptions of events can be shaped, while revealing the attitude, evaluation and ideologies of the authors. On the visual level, speakers' attitudes are most readily represented through gaze and pose. Following Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), two kinds of gaze are distinguished on the basis of ‘visual address’, i.e. the relation between the person in the image and the viewer: demand image and offer image. Pose is related to the manner of taking up space and carving out physical space in terms of close proximity (intimacy) and distance.

Chapter 4 deals with ways of representing people. The classification of social actors is largely based on van Leeuwen's categories (1996) and includes personalisation vs. impersonalisation, individualisation vs. collectivisation, specification vs. genericisation, nomination vs. functionalization. This is supplemented with honorifics, objectivation, anonymisation, suppression, aggregation and pronominalisation. Representational strategies in visual communication include the positioning of the viewer in relation to people inside the image. Thus, for instance, distance and angle may signify social relations. In addition, many images achieve positive or negative stereotypical representations and are used for the categorization of people and not the depiction of particular individuals. It is also rightly pointed out that significance needs to be sought in the exclusion, i.e. the non-representation, of others.

Chapter 5 delves more into the technicalities of Halliday's grammar by documenting transitivity and verb processes. It is shown that the encoding of diverse processes (material, mental, behavioural, verbal, relational and existential) is closely linked to the issue of agency assigned to individuals and groups. Again, this can help to reveal the evaluative attitude and ideological stance of the author. As regards the visual representation of transitivity, it is dealt with in the analysis of several sample photographs. Nevertheless, the theoretical discussion is very brief. It would certainly be worthwhile to extend the section on the visual representation

of action, especially since it is an area that remains relatively under-researched and promises to hold some potentially interesting insights.

Chapter 6 elaborates on one of the major issues of CDA, namely the revelation of concealed information, by focusing on nominalisation and presupposition. Through these devices, meanings are “taken for granted and stable when in fact they may be contestable and ideological” (137). The numerous effects of nominalisation are outlined, and the nominal transformation is illustrated with ample examples. Presupposition is likewise related to concealment, particularly when the presupposed information becomes self-evident and the original ideological usage of presupposition becomes backgrounded.

The final two chapters deal with rhetorical and pragmatic issues. Chapter 7 discusses traditional means of persuasion, namely rhetoric and metaphor, documenting the individual rhetorical tropes (hyperbole, personification, metonymy, synecdoche). Chapter 8 addresses modality and hedging, as a linguistic articulation of speakers’ commitment to the truth of the propositions they make. It is revealing to see how, for instance, the (non-)use of modals is linked to the way speakers construct their identity and authority, and how hedging creates strategic ambiguity, often softening the blunt impact of messages. While Chapter 7 is strangely lacking in the parallel discussion of rhetorical tropes in visual communication (it would not be too difficult to find some good examples of visual metaphor, for instance), Chapter 8 again makes for some enticing reading in terms of modality in images. The ‘truth’ of images, it is argued, is not a matter of mere verisimilitude. Instead, images may have ‘sensory truth’, i.e. some emotive resonance, which is obtained as a result of the articulation of detail, background, depth, light, shadow, tone, colour modulation and saturation.

As the outline of the contents indicates, the textbook does a very good job in providing students with a comprehensive toolkit of analytical means for doing CDA. After reading the book, they will be adequately equipped to undertake a meaningful, critically-oriented analysis of diverse texts. Moreover, they will be able to complement their analysis with relevant interpretation – they will be able to appreciate how verbal and visual means interplay in communicating explicit and implicit meanings and how ideologies and power relations may be concealed in texts. Needless to say, the textbook provides good models for the application of the theory and the interpretation of data. It uses several sample texts and images that recur and are commented on again and again. The complexity of the discourses and ideologies is thus revealed chapter by chapter as the reader progresses through the book. Understandably, the book requires a linear reading; but the gradual acquisition of the CDA toolkit enables the students to see how each new phenomenon they learn about reveals a new layer of meaning in the texts and images. Arguably, this approach may sometimes appear a bit repetitive (some examples, for instance, recur in the text in a verbatim fashion, as is the case on pages 86-87 and 117-118, but this is perhaps inevitable if a given text is gradually discussed across the scope of almost 200 pages); but, on the other hand, the choice of the case studies reflects some of the traditional topics of CDA (political debates, women’s lifestyle magazines, war news reporting) and provides students with issues they can easily relate to (immigration, marketization of education, commodification of health care, etc.).

This book is yet another example of how the multimodal approach (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2001, van Leeuwen 2005) is currently gaining momentum in discourse analysis, leading to a complex and multi-faceted analysis of media texts (cf. also Bednarek and Caple 2012, another recent book on multimodal news discourse analysis, as well as Caple 2013 on the social semiotic aspects of the use of images in journalism). Although the book has some minor drawbacks (e.g. the typesetting does not always make it clear whether one is reading the authors’ commentary or sample texts), this is a publication that is a must for all students of the humanities. Without presupposing much prior linguistic knowledge, Machin and Mayr not only lead students into the discipline of CDA but, more importantly, also cultivate their skills of critical thinking, proving how power and ideology can be deeply

ingrained within the tiniest meaning-making components of messages, both on the verbal and the visual levels.

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Sebastian M. Rasinger. 2013. *Quantitative Research in Linguistics, An Introduction, Second Edition*. London: Bloomsbury, 286 pp., ISBN 978-1-4411-8010-0.

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This is the second edition of Sebastian Rasinger's introduction to the research methods used in quantitative linguistics. It is a clear and concise textbook for students with little or no background in statistical methods, and will guide the reader from the very basics on to more advanced concepts, with an emphasis on Microsoft Excel as a companion program for statistical calculations.

The book is divided into three parts. The first one is an extremely readable introduction to the fundamental concepts of quantitative research, including an in-depth look at statistical variables, research planning, questionnaire design, data collection and ethics. The second part is concerned with what to do with data. It is a very hands-on approach to understanding and analyzing statistical data, with easy-to-follow explanations of how statistical tests are used and for what kind of data. Both parts one and two include a diverse range of exercises for the reader to make sure they have mastered the tools they have just read about. The third part, which is quite short, provides a very useful and practical introduction to meta-analysis, a quick discussion of other tests and software, and solutions to the exercises. All in all, project design, data collection and data analysis are explained in a clear, no-nonsense, step-by-step fashion, and the reader will put the book down with a firm grounding in the fundamentals of statistics.

From a practical point of view, Rasinger's book is just that – practical. The author intelligently chose to draw his examples from actual linguistic research, which most students will probably be familiar with (for instance Labov's work on the social stratification of /r/ or Lakoff's study of women's speech). The inclusion of keywords at the beginning of chapters makes the book extremely simple to browse through when searching for a specific item; "further reading" sections at the end of each chapter, with comments from the author, are particularly useful, and chapter 11 provides handy tables of critical values for various tests.

Rasinger manages to break down statistical concepts into extremely easy-to-understand bits, which will be invaluable for those students for whom the word "statistics" is an object of

dread. Never once does he lose the reader, which is a feat in itself and makes it easier to read than Johnson's 2008 *Quantitative Methods in Linguistics*, for instance, which would be my choice textbook for beginners, were it a little less dense. As anyone who has had to teach (or learn) statistics knows, it can be a daunting process, especially for students who fear anything mathematical. In that respect, Rasinger's book is as reader-friendly as can be.

For all its merits, though, the book is plagued by sloppy editing — including an impressive number of typographical errors for a second edition (I counted close to a hundred), and relatively frequent confusing syntax (for instance, “Part of the study focused on how Aboriginal children perceive the use of Aboriginal English (AE) and Standard Australian English (SAE), and what they thought about how their teachers' and peers' perceived AE and SAE use across three different contexts”, 238). Even though it is meant to be an introduction and manages to explain complex concepts in simple terms, it can also be a bit simplistic at times. Page 30, for instance, offers an overly long, drawn-out definition of what a tautological hypothesis is. Part 3 reads like it was written in a rush; a very quick explanation of how to read a MANOVA's result is basically the author telling the reader to focus on the significance value, and the very brief introductions to R and SPSS could not have been briefer, even though I feel they should have been longer — they have virtually no practical use as such. Arguably the focus of the book is on using Excel, but any readers serious enough about statistics, once they have read their way through the final chapters, will probably want to move on to R or SPSS and leave Excel behind. A list of commands for R, just like the one provided for Excel, would have been a nice addition.

Of course, there is only so much you can do until an introductory book turns into an encyclopedia, and as far as what to include and what to leave out is concerned, on the whole, I would tend to go with Rasinger's choices. But as has been noted before (e.g. Thomas Hoffman's review of the first edition), I find the author's decision to use Microsoft Excel as the book's companion software problematic. Choosing to focus on Excel, which was not designed for statistics in the first place, and which not all students will want or be able to pay for, has its issues – something that Rasinger himself acknowledges at times, as some of the tests he writes about cannot be performed using Excel. Clearly it will enable statistics beginners to get results quickly and easily, but for those students who will have to use statistics extensively, I would recommend starting with R from the get-go.

All things considered, I have to admit that, in this case, I cannot decide whether the pros outweigh the cons or the cons outweigh the pros. Rasinger clearly has a knack for explaining things clearly, and the way the book is laid out is solid. I might recommend it to my students as a primer – although I would probably wait for a third, overhauled, more polished edition to come out –, but I would strongly encourage them to use another textbook alongside it.

Marjolijn Verspoor, Kees de Bot and Wander Lowie (eds.) *A Dynamic Approach to Second Language Development: Methods and Techniques*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 211 pp., ISBN 978-90-272-1998-5.

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A Dynamic Approach to Second Language Development: Methods and Techniques edited by Verspoor, de Bot and Lowie focuses on second language development from a dynamic systems theory (DST) perspective, which the authors define as “a general theory that explains how [language as a] complex system, which consists of a set of interrelated variables that continually mutually affect each other, may change over time” (p.25). This means that

language learning is influenced by internal variables (e.g. morphology, syntax, collocations, lexicon) and external factors (e.g. environment, age, first language). These variables are not separate; they mutually interact and influence one another, which ultimately impacts language. The theory argues that since language is a complex dynamic system, using traditional approaches to examine language learning will not provide reliable results. After a brief discussion of the shortcomings of traditional second language development (SLD) approaches, the book presents an overview of the dynamic systems theory (DST) approach to the study of first and second language development. This theory studies language as a set of interrelated variables that influence one another. By avoiding “linear causality” and “generalizable predictions,” DST pursues “tendencies, patterns and contingencies” (23) instead. The authors include several guidelines and research examples in the form of case studies of real language learners, in addition to a 100-page how-to section to invite researchers and students in first and second language studies to conduct further studies and research in the field from a DST perspective.

The first section of the book consists of an introduction and two chapters that explain the dynamic systems theory approach to second language development. The authors explain in detail the idea that language is a complex system and show how language is made of overlapping subsystems; therefore, in order to study language development, the authors argue, one needs to “examine as many overlapping systems as possible, to see not only how each one of these emerges and develops over time, but also how the different subsystems may interact” (37). For example, subsystems of language like the lexical, phonological and syntactic are interrelated and interconnected. Change in one system affects the other systems, and so on. The dynamic systems of language are not static, linear or predictable; they are influenced by both internal re-organization and external environments and resources. Thus they constantly change and readjust. The authors give a simple analogy to explain this phenomenon: a sandcastle. When one first builds a sandcastle on the beach, due to the wetness of the sand, the castle looks stable and intact. However, internally all sorts of processes are taking place, which ultimately affect the levels of humidity and adhesiveness. There are also external factors like the shaking of the ground from the people walking on the beach, the wind, the water and the sand. All these processes and factors that start as the first part of the castle is built and continue until the castle crumbles down, are similar to the internal and external factors that influence the learning of language. The book argues that one problem with traditional SLD approaches is that they might not pay attention to these external and internal factors that are interwoven in the very essence of language development.

In the second section, the authors present practical examples for the use of the dynamic systems approach. Chapter three, for example, entitled “Coding and Extracting Data”, provides a variety of tools for students and researchers to use such as Word, Excel, CLAN and CHILDES. The chapter explains how to use these tools by giving an example of a case study of lexical and syntactic development in an advanced second language student. The other chapters in this section focus on the idea of variability in language and the interaction between the different variables and the impact this interaction has on the study of second language development. All these chapters use data from real learners. The data show that, although all learners show development, there is a great deal of variability, as learners acquire and use different vocabulary and grammatical structures at different levels. The how-to sections at the end of the book function as a reference for the readers hoping to get a better grasp of the theory and its application. The how- to sections, for example, show readers how to make and use variability graphs, min-max graphs and moving window correlations.

I think the authors have succeeded in making DST more accessible to researchers and students by putting together what might become the main scripture of the dynamic systems theory in second language development. They build on the work of Paul van Geert, who is considered one of the proponents of this theory, and provide an account of all the progress and

development that have been achieved in the research of this theory so far. They have tried to make the theory more approachable by providing a large variety of examples and guidelines. However, despite all the research examples and the guidelines that the book provide, using the dynamic systems theory in second language acquisition and development studies may pose several challenges. There is a good reason why until now we have seen but very few studies using this approach. This lack of studies is the result of a kind of distrust and skepticism towards this theory. Conducting research and empirical studies using this approach can be extremely hard especially if we keep in mind that DST does not limit the variables that impact second or first language acquisition and development. Without limited variables, researchers will find themselves struggling against constantly shifting possibilities and contingencies.

All in all, I think this book can be an interesting read, not only to those interested in the dynamic systems theory of language development, but to everyone who has an interest in language arts and linguistics. The book can also help readers see language learning through a new lens, and might inspire learners and teachers in their quest for better ways to learn languages.

Maren Tova Linett (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Women Writers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 252 pp. ISBN: 9780521515054

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Scholars of Modernist Studies recognise an increasing, marked interest in the subject area of Modernism. The trend is to pluralise Modernism, to revise its rubrics, to identify new features in an effort to understand this very unusual turn of the literature. In this effort, the temporal boundaries of Modernism have been moved and removed. As Modernism, in particular what is usually and controversially termed High Modernism, is associated with canon making, revision, rediscovery, reconceptualisation - therefore the *Companion to Modernist Women Writers* serves a much needed purpose.

Maren Tova Linett, a leading scholar of British and Irish Fiction Studies, has included the articles of twelve authors, presenting aspects of Modernist work by women writers. The editor had neither the ambition nor the desire to compile an all-inclusive volume. The concept was to include studies that are multiform, equally addressing American and British Modernist writers. It was my expectation, however, to find attempts in the *Companion* to actually revise, reshape, rediscover, or even bring to new life or into new light more authors like Evelyn Scott (absent even from the comprehensive lists in the Chronology Chart).

In the authoritative Preface to the *Companion*, Linett outlines its projected structure and content. She broadens the definition of Modernism, recognising its diversity, including studies on poetry and prose, on modernist writers of different race, ethnicity, religious beliefs etc. Some of the articles focus on particular subjects (for example “Magazines, Presses, and Salons in Women’s Modernism” by Jayne Marek) and provide opportunities for a more detailed and elaborate vision of Modernism.

Bonnie Kime Scott’s opening article “Transforming the Novel” traces the origin and progress of Modernism from the 1890s to the beginning of the Second World War. Scott maintains that “modernist women actively transformed the novel to reflect their unique perceptions of everyday life” (17). During the 1900-1909 period, the novel reflects the changes taking place in society (May Sinclair, Dorothy Richardson, Gertrude Stein); the next stage marks the transformation of feminist Modernism (drawing very interesting parallels with the work of Katherine Mansfield, and illustrating the change in the novels of Djuna Barnes, Rebecca West, Jean Rhys) and, finally, the 1930s – with new processes taking place –

Elizabeth Bowen reflecting on the Irish Civil War, Zora Neale Hurston and Nella Larsen, turning “modernist techniques towards question of race” (30).

In “Modernist Women Poets and the Problem of Form”, Miranda Hickman considers the work of four poets – Mina Loy, H. D., Marianne Moore and Canadian P. K. Page - and their employment of formal experiments, most usually foregrounded by “prominent male moderns” (34). Mina Loy’s Futurism, H. D.’s Imagism, Marianne Moore’s “generative relationship” (39) with the poetics and method of T. S. Eliot, Page’s links with both Imagism and T. S. Eliot are originators of new concepts and experimental forms.

In “Women’s Modernism and Performance” Penny Farfan outlines the “under-represented accounts of the development of [women’s] Modernism” (58) in playwriting, theatre production and performance. She uses as framework Djuna Barnes’s famous performance of 1914, when the novelist, in her capacity as New York journalist subjected herself voluntarily to forcible feeding and described this act (performance) in her essay “How It Feels to Be Forcibly Fed”. Dismissed at the time as stunt or performative journalism, Farfan proposes to consider it now from the point of view of theatrical discourse, a form of modern drama. Most of the dramatic performances which would belong to this experimentally justified form typically address political and social issues: the dramas of Ruth Snyder, Susan Glaspell, Elizabeth Robbins or Edna St. Vincent Millay (pronounced creators of suffrage drama, using “theatre for political ends” (51)). Theatre projects of the period were all homes of the new modern drama that addressed issues of national, cultural interest, or African-American issues with the most active contribution from women artists. The salons and other private meeting places provided opportunities for similar experiments. In addition to avant-garde performances, Farfan lists here also popular performances such as Josephine Baker’s shows in *La revue nègre*, *Danse sauvage* at Folies-Bergère, queer motifs and cross-dressing; Isadora Duncan’s new dance, and the dada performances of Baroness Elsa von Freytag Loringhoven. In addition to this original conceptualisation of performance and drama, credit must be given to Farfan for redeeming many of the above, as well as other important artists from oblivion.

“Magazines, Presses, and Salons in Women’s Modernism” is a unique cultural study of the literary venues of Modernism. In most cases these have indeed housed the experiments of contemporary authors. Jayne Marek aptly comments that “Modernist studies regularly cross borders” (63) and this seems to reflect the complexity of Modernism(s). The author emphasises that the traditional division into high and low culture does not in fact apply in most cases. Salon culture has significantly changed from the times of the eighteenth century aristocratic salon, through the coffee house to the private homes of Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Greenwich Village and the African-American salons. The essay informs in great detail about less popular salons, as well as less popular magazines and presses, in addition to the legendary *Poetry*, *Little Review*, *The Egoist* and *The Dial*. One of the most impressive aspects in these descriptions is the data on the frequenters of the salons and their little known relationships.

Patricia Juliana Smith’s article “Gender in Women’s Modernism” is a study of the philosophical aspects of women Modernism; it analyses the New Woman, open marriages, the lesbian topics of nineteenth century male authors and the authentic lesbianism of modernist women authors, with a solid interpretation of the problem of sexual marginalisation. The work of Willa Cather and Gertrude Stein is used to illustrate the features of gender, and so is the work of some less popular writers, who became victims of literary oblivion.

Throughout the *Companion*, the topic of race is present due to the significant contribution of African-American women writers to Modernism. “Black Women’s Modernist Literature” by Thadious M. Davies addresses an exhaustive list of major and less well known black women modernists – identifying their presence in salons, anthologies, in East Coast and Southern literary criticism and theory, in poetry, politics, or prose fiction. Jean Radford’s

“Race and Ethnicity in White Women’s Modernist Literature” complements Davies’s study. Race and ethnicity include not only African-American discourses, but also Jewish, colonial and imperial discourses, foreignness, otherness in general.

In “Geomodernism, Postcoloniality, and Women’s Writing”, Laura Doyle’s starting point is Edward Said’s description of “canonical Anglo-European Modernism as an aesthetic attempt to contain the crisis of early twentieth-century imperialist capitalism” (129). She uses Virginia Woolf and Jean Rhys, as well as postmodern author Michelle Cliff to justify her concept of geomodernist writers; discussing Anita Desai, Nadine Gordimer, Zadie Smith, as well as the canonical Woolf, Rhys and Djuna Barnes, she explains how their narratives “capture the experience of living within a long history of coercive ideologies” (143).

Visual culture – cinema, photography, visual arts -, just as other technological innovations are inspirational and depressing to modernists, and Maggie Humm, in “Women Modernists and Visual Culture”, analyses the impact of the visual arts on modernist experiments. She comments on *Close-Up*’s famous contributors H. D., Bryher, Dorothy Richardson, Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moor, Woolf’s artist sister Vanessa Bell, Virginia Woolf herself and their discussions and debates on visual culture.

Suzette A. Henke (“Modernism and Trauma”) believes that “the historical trauma of the First World War ushered in a pervasive chord of cultural upheaval that would dominate twentieth-century women’s fiction” (161) and analyses the effects of trauma in such novels as Rebecca West’s *Return of the Soldier*, H. D.’s *Bid Me To Live*, Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, Djuna Barnes’s *Nightwood*. She claims that much of that fiction had been written in fact as “autobiographical narratives that enabled them to [...] come to terms with emotional trauma” (169).

The fundamentals of political activism, primarily associated with women’s rights and chiefly with suffrage activism, have their point of departure during the first-wave feminist movement. The aesthetics of suffrage politics, as Sowon S. Park debates in “Political Activism and Women’s Modernism”, is avant-garde, but it uses different strategies. Women modernists were skeptical of religion and satirised it for various reasons, but they found consolation in the occult, searching for, as Heather Ingman puts it in “Religion and the Occult in Women’s Modernism”, an “alliance of spirituality and feminism” (187). Institutional religion is rejected and the escape is in mysticism, the occult, the supernatural (in the work of seminal modernists such as May Sinclair). Yet another trend was the creation of “female deities” (195).

This brief review of the *Companion* is aimed at confirming the current view that Modernism does not contain only formal experimentation. Political, social, and religious issues play a significant role in the modernist creative art, with women writers of the period playing a major role.

Marcela Kostihová: *Shakespeare in Transition: Political Appropriations in the Postcommunist Czech Republic*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 240 pp. ISBN: 978-0230203242.

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Shakespeare in Transition argues that translations and performances of Shakespeare’s plays produced in the Czech Republic between the end of the communist regime in 1989 and the country’s accession to the European Union in 2004 have a strong and distinct political edge. Kostihová seeks to refute the prevalent opinion that the postcommunist Czech Shakespeare on page and stage has had little relevance to the country’s current political situation, in contrast to

the previous three hundred years, when Shakespeare was used as a vehicle of both political propaganda and dissent. Though we might expect that political uses of Shakespeare would have lost their impetus following the disintegration of the totalitarian Soviet-backed regime, Kostihová demonstrates that this has not been the case. She proposes instead that the larger socio-economic pressures attendant on the major political changes and later the specific demands imposed on the Czech Republic as part of the accession requirements by the EU have inspired a rich array of politically motivated translations and performances.

The book presents convincing evidence through a series of thematically grouped case studies. The first of these sections contends that the proliferation of new Shakespeare translations after 1989, and the so-called translation wars that ensued, express an anxiety over the country's cultural future vis-à-vis the rapidly changing political and economic situation. The conflict pitted those who believed that Shakespeare should be translated into contemporary colloquial Czech, accessible to all, against those supporting more formal renditions into older varieties of the language, only accessible to an erudite elite. As the heated debate unfolded on the front pages of major national newspapers, the participants did not hesitate to label the translations they opposed as acts of high treason against the Czech state and its people. Kostihová shows how this passionate investment in different translation styles is deeply political. For both camps, the continued viability of Shakespeare as a central component of Czech cultural capital depends on a particular relationship of the texts (and by extension performances using them) to the changing socio-economic and socio-political realities of the country.

The next cluster of case studies focuses on issues of gender identity and sets out to show that the EU's demands for legislation safeguarding gender equality, gay and lesbian rights, and prevention of domestic violence reminded many Czechs of the communist regime's earlier dubious attempts at implementing gender equality. As a result, Kostihová argues, a sense of normative masculinity became a central part of Czech postcommunist subjectivity. The book analyses this phenomenon through a series of detailed studies of Czech productions of Shakespeare's plays from the 1990s and early 2000s. Kostihová argues that, in their overwhelming reaffirmation of normative masculinity, these productions display a form of political dissent against the patronising, globalising, and sometimes outright exploitative pressures exerted on the country by the EU and the West in general. She provides several accounts of productions of *The Taming of the Shrew* that condoned the forced transformation (the taming) of the main female protagonist from an independent feisty woman into a meek submissive wife. The rare productions which went against this grain, such as a dramatisation of Shakespeare's sonnets set in a post-industrial garbage dump and enacted by two male actors openly engaging in a homosexual relationship, were received poorly by both critics and audiences. Considered all together, the case studies show how the reception of Czech performances of Shakespeare was played out against the wider struggles to define a sense of national identity after the collapse of the communist regime.

The book is successful thanks to Kostihová's ability to combine a highly informed and lively analysis of Czech Shakespeare (in the form of both performances and translations) with a complex understanding of the political, economic, and social developments happening in the Czech Republic and Europe at large. The book also draws on an impressive range of sources, rarely seen together in a single volume of literary scholarship: personal interviews with translators and theatre professionals, performance reviews, photographs from productions, statistics about socio-economic conditions in the country, official EU documents, sociological studies of Czech attitudes to gender issues, as well as relevant literary scholarship and theory. All these sources are carefully selected, presented, and organised to draw in literary and theatre scholars familiar with Shakespeare, but likely less familiar with the nuances of recent Czech history. The book also provides a general history of Czech Shakespeare translations and productions from the preceding eras, which in its quality surpasses existing scholarship

focused specifically on these earlier periods. For this reason, Kostihova's book is the current definitive reference on Czech Shakespeare. Although the author herself never explicitly includes this among her goals, because of its rigorously interdisciplinary multimodal methodology and its refusal to simplify complex cultural phenomena, *Shakespeare in Transition* can at the same time serve as a model for all scholars working on foreign appropriations and political uses of Shakespeare.

Giovanni Cianci, Caroline Patey, Sara Sullam (eds.) 2010. *Transits: The Nomadic Geographies of Anglo-American Modernism*. Bern: Peter Lang, 316 pp. ISBN 978-3-03911-949-3.

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This collection of essays takes an informed approach to understanding the nature of the "nomadic geographies" of the title – sophisticated psycho-cultural formations increasingly construed inside webs of discourses. The essays begin by acknowledging that there is a possibility of exploring space as a geo-textual construct and from there argue that "the shift which projected the culture of Modernism in an entirely different spatial dimension" (xv) has been "accompanied by strikingly significant and vital forms of expression" (xv). Essentially, the argument is that Modernist narratives are permeated by assumptions about dichotomies such as private and public, nomadic and sedimentary, dynamic and static, far and near, hidden and visible, presentable and unpresentable, which rather than emphasising the sense of loss and dejection, bring to light the "aesthetic and semantic possibilities of what happens in the process of moving" (xv). Considering that this collection of essays brings together in print many voices that participated in a 2008 conference of the same name, both its scope and theoretical grip are sufficiently extensive to make thorough cohesion very difficult to achieve. Yet, despite momentary lapses, the book's collective voice emerges clearly.

For the contributors of these essays, it is important to take into account not only the literary and textual coordinates, but also the historical and ideological subtexts of Anglo-American Modernism. The scope of this research therefore is extensive, because in trying to capture "the complexities and diversities of the modernist experience" (xiii), here disclosed in more general terms as "movement in space and its representations" (xiii), it geographically and culturally "unfolds between Great Britain and the United States" (xiii). At heart, this collective study seeks to create a constructive terminology and a productive typology to map a more nuanced understanding of Anglo-American Modernist geographies of movement in general, and as permeated by colonialism, post-colonialism, globalization, nomadism and multiculturalism in particular.

To ensure a well-defined temporal framework, the editors, Giovanni Cianci, Caroline Patey and Sara Sullam, have inserted a prologue and an epilogue. The body of this book is made of three distinct, yet intersecting trajectories, which account for three separate sections. In general, the essays included in each section complement one another, although at times the rhetorical flow is such that issues raised are not fully explored. This however, given the wealth of texts under examination, the plethora of perspectives, and comprehensive organization, does not impact negatively upon the general value of the study.

In the first section, "The New Grammars of Space," the essays examine space as a formal, iconographic principle. Instead of casting an inert theoretical net upon the texts under examination and forcing conclusions, the contributions seek to explore the "turmoil in the representation of space" (xvi) by juxtaposing a reading of Hardy's *The Return of the Native* (Bullen), Kipling's *Egypt of the Magicians* (Villa), literary and early Modernist texts (Cianci),

and Ford Madox Ford's nomadic Modernist writings (Saunders) against a larger framework of Modernist developments. In this respect, the first section unearths a new grammar of space. Though space itself is more easily accessible with the help of modern technology, the Modernist writers included in this section explicitly recognize the difficulty of situating their experiences in the contexts of their writings.

In the second section, "Poetics on the Move," the contributions bring in the deployment of active engagements with literary texts and literary and cultural theories. The poetics of movement, suggested through topical examinations of "geographies of loss" (107) in Djuna Barnes (Caselli), the "politics and poetics of space" (123) in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (Pelaschiar), the Anglo-German poetics of Christopher Isherwood (Sullam), and the positioning of Joyce and De Chirico in Beckett's *Endgame* (Restivo), relates how intersecting discourses of spatial disruption and dislocation give way to "form and aesthetics" (xvi).

The third section, "Passing Places, or, Locating Nomadism," complements the discussion by providing a combination of locations and their literary and theoretical analyses. While almost impossible to keep an eye on the alterations from one location to the other, given the format of this study, each of these contributions provides a focused critical analysis of how specific locations relate in mobile geographies. Their complexities captured inside specific locations such as the Victoria Embankment and Picadilly Circus Underground Station in Woolf's novels (Bradshaw), Sussex and Romney Marsh (Patey), Auden's islands (Smith), New Orleans (Maffi), and the Mexican-American *transfrontera* (Schiavini) signal what the real aesthetic and semantic potential of nomadic geographies can be.

In conclusion, this collection of essays is significantly valuable for anyone involved in dynamic conversations about culturally driven interpretations of geographical spaces. In fact, geographies in motion have constantly called their cultural heritage into question, and, from there, projected Anglo-American Modernist aesthetics in new directions. Examining Modernist writers' voyages across the continents and acknowledging their quests on how movement, nomadism and migration should be articulated in their work extends an invitation to construct a more nuanced understanding of the Modernist experience itself.

Each contribution in this collection includes references and bibliographical notes that will be very useful to anybody who wants to do more in depth research. Complementing the discussions of Cianci and Restivo, an appendix of 15 illustrations by Marinetti, Bocconi, Chagall and De Chirico is placed at the end of the book. There is also a helpful index.

Rita Christian and Judith Misrahi-Barak (eds.) 2011. *India and the Diasporic Imagination / L'Inde et l'imagination diasporique: with poems by Khal Torabully*. Montpellier: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 521 pp. ISBN: 978-2-84269-927-7.

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India and the Diasporic Imagination is the admirable publication of papers presented at the international conference held in France at the Université Paul Valéry in April 2009, with all but three papers written in English. The volume is divided into several sections, each punctuated with a poem by Khal Torabully, generally extracts from *Ode à Pessoa* or *Voice from Future Past*, thus providing a creative structure which frames the academic contributions.

After an introduction by the editors highlighting the plurality of India and its diaspora, the first section, "Setting the Diasporic Stage," is meant to lay some historical groundwork. "India" should be understood in its pre-Partition geography, essentially a synonym for South Asia, as perspectives from Pakistan and Bangladesh are included in the volume. The East

Indian experience in British Guiana, the role of memory, food and film, or a pre-Orientalism writing class with Mr. Khan serve to underscore the constructed, representational, discursive nature of the Indian diaspora, significantly from a time before the term “diaspora” existed, (or if it did, it was exclusively used in the Jewish context).

“Loss, Mourning and Trauma” then links geographical displacement with psychological distress in both the individual and collective spheres; memory, and equally important, forgetting, as integral parts of the experience of cultural de-territorialization are presented in a variety of historical contexts. Unreliable memory and the rhetoric of nationalism in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, insidious traumas built into the colonial system in *Cereus Blooms at Night*, or mutual invisibility in *Maps for Lost Lovers* highlight the disappointment which awaits many who sought a better life for themselves or their children. Reappropriation of the process of storytelling, from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* to the novel form allows one to escape binary thinking in the example of *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, while the immanence of roots and the transcendence of movement become interdependent in a critical appraisal of *The Inheritance of Loss*.

The question of return is seen from several perspectives in the third section, “To Go Home, or Not to Go Home,” from the “(im-)possibility of backtracking” to the “going home syndrome” or the “return of the natives” in the work of M. G. Vassanji, Monica Ali and Michael Ondaatje. Throughout these authors’ novels, successful returns depend on “reconciliation, regeneration and tentative reconnection,” according to Christian and Misrahi-Barak, whereby success is measured by the ability “to achieve agency and meaning” (25).

Alternative spaces from which to negotiate identity and instigate political action are the focus of “From Diasporic Dislocations and Re-Locations to Diaspora as Thirdspace,” through the lens of theories handed down by Bhabha, Trinh and hooks, not to mention Soja and Lefebvre. Some spaces of affirmation were opened through the partition of Bengal, others travelled via cultural texts with indentured servants to Trinidad and Tobago, while others reposition subject positions of Indo-Caribbean women.

The longest section, “The Visual and the Oral, the Playful and the Virtual,” attests to the importance of other media, the visual and the virtual (not forgetting sports, music and food), in current research. Cricket, that most English of sports, becomes the marker of diasporic reclamation along several axes: political, historical, and cultural. Cinematic adaptation of South Asian novels becomes a political issue, depending on what is represented, and perhaps more importantly what is left out, not to mention the historical timeframe in which the director chooses to set the film. Food is not only a commodity, but “metaphor and rhetoric” as well, “central to the perception of India in its diaspora” (27), whereas, to continue the food metaphor, *Mississippi Masala* provides the example of cultures which in fact do not mix. Bhangra and hip hop, however, blend more easily in California, whereas connectivity in cyberspace, and its role in identity maintenance / transformation, is the central question of “Desigirls@blogspot.com.”

Francophone (con)texts comprise the last section of this volume. “Diaspora & Coolitude” examines descendants’ perceptions of indenture in French overseas colonies, while the penal colony, though fictionalized, maintains its links with the real world. The final essay brings us full circle, with an examination of Khal Torabully’s notion of *coolitude* through the vehicle of poetry, then closing the volume with a final poem by Torabully and an echo of Eliot: “This is the way the world ends avek ene mousoir / Shanti shanty shanty Ashanti / Not with your bang but with multiple whispers...” (479).

India and the Diasporic Imagination makes a significant contribution to current research, especially in a domain wherein the term “diaspora” has, in a very short time, grown exponentially to include much in its purview. The colonial and postcolonial legacy of South Asia had already created hybrid subjects, even among those who never left the subcontinent, yet such “preparation,” as we see from many of the contributions in this volume, did not make

migration any easier for those who left, nor even for some who chose to return. It is no surprise, therefore, that studies of diaspora, migration and exile often dovetail with studies of traumatic experience, both individual and collective, and the sense that being part of a diaspora often includes an element of loss. Yet, as many of the authors show, the diasporic imagination has made room for new spaces, through literature and music, film and food, cyberspace and inner space, from which to form communities, integrate, accommodate, resist, transform, evolve and grow. Ultimately, it is the imagination which redeems the diaspora.

Hedda Friberg-Harnesk, Gerald Porter and Joakim Wrethed (eds.) 2010. *Beyond Ireland: Encounters Across Cultures*. Bern: Peter Lang, 334 pp. ISBN 978-3-0343-0270-8 pb.

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Beyond Ireland greets us with the difficulty of talking about absolutes like tradition and authenticity in modern Ireland. The editors urge us to read the collection metaphorically, as not excluding intra-Irish subjects, with an ear for the “creative frictions and fictions that result from the dissolving of old loyalties, moving beyond nationalism to the culturally diverse, beyond a bilingual Ireland to a polyvocal one, beyond the imagined community towards a virtual one, beyond a territorial Ireland to an ex-centric one” (1). This is a timely and significant pursuit, because it touches on current trends developing in literary and cultural theory but also addresses the increasing necessity for visualizing another nation. This volume brings together many interesting articles presenting ways to read texts with new lens.

Åke Persson reads Kate O’Riordan’s *The Memory Stones* (2003) using viticulture and wine-tasting as metaphors and tools in the unlocking of past tensions, but also, and crucially, as offering a strategy of “how to deal with the cultural pressures that Ireland is facing in the globalized world” (54): “the novel seems to suggest,” Persson notes, “that a firm sense of belonging, of knowing who you are, attached to a uniquely local and personal narrative, makes it possible to open up and connect to the rest of the world” (83). Encounters across borders and the mapping of the ever-changing geographies of trajectories are favoured throughout *Beyond Ireland*, which starts with a look eastwards, mapping a trail increasingly blurred.

Charles Armstrong explores encounters with the oriental other, when Irish poets meet Japanese art, and finds that, though productive differences may come into play, “Buddha may sometimes look a little like Plato in fancy dress, Hokusai like Edmund Burke in a kimono” (30), while Billy Gray is interested in the ways in which Irish Orientalist writings promoted pluralism and cultural and religious tolerance, using as a test case the influence of Zen Buddhism on the work of Northern Irish essayist Chris Arthur and his trilogy of collected essays, namely *Irish Nocturnes* (1999), *Irish Willow* (2002), and *Irish Haiku* (2005). Carmen Zamorano Llena looks at the continuous reconstruction of the concept of the nation in the articulation of new narratives of difference and diversity in Roddy Doyle’s *The Deportees and Other Stories* (2007) and Cauvery Madhavan’s *Paddy Indian* (2001). Róisín Keys discusses the constant re-negotiation of cultural identities as cultural boundaries are blurred in Brian Friel’s *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), suggesting that the play’s closing monologue indicates that “all we ever have access to, in the pursuit of the ‘real’ or the ‘authentic’, is an array of representations and constructs and the many ways in which these are mediated, performed and reproduced in our lives” (120). In one of the final pieces included in the volume, we then read of the multidimensionality offered by the connection of history, literature, and geography and the outsider’s viewpoint afforded to a writer who adopts an interpretative perspective along those lines; the “ever-changing geography of the walk,” Anders Olsson suggests as regards

Colm Tóibín's *Bad Blood: A Walk Along the Irish Border* (1987), constructs "a mosaic of transcultural encounters provides a multidimensionality of openings which subverts the rigidity of the two dimensions of the border tension" (309).

Following a similar trail of thought, the two pieces in the volume discussing the work of John Banville suggest, in Joakim Wrethed's terms, that "the freedom of any reader is that she/he may turn to the text to see for her/himself, which is an immanent ethics, but only as long as it is not totalized into some sort of ideological truth" (239). Wrethed explores the themes of history, violence, evil, and art/text interpretation in Banville's novel *The Book of Evidence* (1989), and Hedda Friberg the intra-textual encounters across cultural borderlines in Swedish novelist Carl Henning Wijkmark's *Dacapo* (1994) and John Banville's *Kepler* (1981). In both novels, Friberg notes, Central Europe is patterned on grids and webs where divisive and energizing encounters occur and people freely move and mix.

Romani culture, Irish Traveller stories and poetry's plural voices are equally well represented in *Beyond Ireland*. Lene Yding Pedersen examines the shaping of a fictional image of Romani culture and history prompted by her reading of Colum McCann's *Zoli* (2006), Martin Shaw views reflexivity as a crucial part in understanding difference - using as a test case Irish Traveller Nan Joyce's *My Life on the Road* (1985) in light of an anti-Traveller protest action held in Tallaght, south Dublin, in 1981 - and Gerald Porter studies the transformations of the localized narrative ballad, often known as "Lord Gregory", in the Irish diaspora and finds in "Maid of Aughrim", a song taken up by Irish travellers, a song of dislocation concerned with migration and displacement than with presence.

Anne Karhio focuses on the encounters between Irish and Jewish traditions in Paul Muldoon's poetry and, in particular, in the way Muldoon challenges both "the traditional lyric mode of an over-arching first-person voice" and "an underlying authoritative order" (126), questioning the idea that "a plurality of voices or textual references acts as an antithesis of human agency and societal engagement" (123). Ruben Moi turns to the ekphrastic and the visual in the poetics of Derek Mahon as revealing "an alternative to conceptualizations of individual, social and national identity in a place [Northern Ireland] that has been dominated by discourses of fixity and retrospection" (193), and Britta Olinder offers a map of the many overlapping boundaries - ethnic, religious, political, cultural - existing in John Hewitt's work, using as a starting point the poetry readings by Hewitt and John Montague in a programme sponsored by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in the late autumn of 1970.

The timeframe the book covers spans mainly from the 1970s to the present day, even though the final piece by Ronald Paul, which explores the significance of Ireland and Irish history to the development of Marxist ideas, shows how the politics of the global colonial system have been determining the condition of the Irish people and breeding new forms of dependence. *Beyond Ireland* offers a wealth of diverse methodologies for interpreting liminality, the politics of recognition and belonging, nationalist stereotypes, and the legacy of colonialism. It is a valuable collection for any scholar interested in the construction of the nation and the myths of origins that accompany it.

Jonathan Roberts (ed.) 2010. *Blake. Wordsworth. Religion*. London and New York: Continuum, xiii + 127 pp., ISBN 978-0-8264-2502-7.

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This innovative short book is part of Continuum's New Directions in Religion and Literature series, which, in the words of the editors, "seeks to develop the long-established relationship

between the disciplines of religion and literature” (viii). Something not explicitly mentioned in the editors’ preface, but evident from many of the books published in the series so far, is an emphasis on experimentation: in form, in genre, even in approach to the topic. Continuum is one of only a few academic publishers to have shown an active and significant interest in the emerging sub-genre of experimental criticism, and Jonathan Roberts’ book contributes to this much-needed sense of reinvention in the field, in a number of small but valuable ways.

The book is divided into eight short chapters, each of which endeavours to read just two poems – Blake’s “To my friend Butts” and an excerpt from Wordsworth’s *The Excursion* – from a variety of perspectives. The whole book takes as its textual focus a little over 230 lines of verse from these two Romantic poets, but examines them using a number of different critical lenses: biography and history, autobiography, mysticism and psychedelics, theology, and religion. Roberts informs us that he has chosen these poems “first because I think they are great poems, and secondly because although they are both widely anthologized, there has been comparatively little critical work written on them” (4). Thus one of the most attractive aspects of this book is that it takes a familiar critical subject – religious vision in the work of Blake and Wordsworth – and yet succeeds in looking at it afresh, through almost exclusive focus on these two short pieces.

The book’s length – or rather relative shortness – sometimes makes each of the brief chapters feel a little too much like part of a whistle-stop tour of its subject: the print is large, and no chapter longer than eighteen pages (many of them are shorter than this), and so occasionally one feels Roberts has just started with his subject and then he is on to the next approach, leaving us wanting more analysis. But this is partly a reflection of Roberts’ skill at reading his poets: the chapter on biography and history is a particular tour de force, using a combination of traditional archival research and modern online meteorological databases to calculate the date of composition of Blake’s poem. This detective work leads to a discussion of “the hermeneutical relationship between fact and narrative” (30), one that has perhaps never been more timely, given the renewed emphasis on archival scholarship in literary research.

But the most inventive chapter is the one on autobiography, in which Roberts recounts the religious vision he experienced after taking mescaline one summer while a postgraduate student. After reading Blake’s poetry while on a camping trip in the Lake District, he underwent a sort of spiritual conversion, seeing the world in Blake’s grain of sand, and eternity within an hour; he describes this very personal spiritual memory with a poetic clarity not often found in literary criticism. The relationship between religion, literature, and autobiography is one which other noted critics have started to explore – John Schad’s bold and pioneering *Someone Called Derrida* springs to mind – and Roberts’ autobiographical account is eloquent and thought-provoking. As with the rest of the book, Roberts is constantly stepping back from his subject and reflecting on the nature of performing, or attempting to perform, a critical reading upon a literary text, and here he is no different. Personal visionary experiences are relevant, he concludes, not least because that is what the poetry itself is conveying; the application of logic, and logic alone, to such poems can only go so far towards elucidating the literary text.

Given that ‘religion’ appears in the title of both Roberts’ book and the series of which it forms a part, it is worth noting that the chapter on religion is arguably the weakest of the book, or at least the only one which this reviewer found occasion to fault in any serious way. In this chapter, the author explains, “I will argue that a statistical majority of British people identify as having a theistic belief, but simultaneously maintain an outlook that is anti-organizational, anti-ecclesiastical, and rooted in private ‘spiritual’ experience” (81). Roberts spends a large part of this chapter discussing the contemporary findings concerning religious belief in Britain, quoting the summary of the 2001 census which states that there

are “37.3 million people in England and Wales who state their religion as Christian” (81). Proceeding to assess these findings, Roberts suggests that many of these people “prefer to identify as ‘spiritual’ rather than ‘religious’, as the former permits a theistic outlook without commitment to the forms of life associated with the latter” (82). But one alternative which Roberts does not mention is that the particular Christian belief of many of those 37.3 million people may be deist rather than theist, which would explain the discrepancy – which Roberts also refers to – between the number who believe in God and the number who regularly go to church. The matter is not as clear-cut as the setting up of a binary between ‘spirituality’ and ‘religion’ would suggest, since deism may not necessarily imply any great spiritual belief in the here-and-now. Blake, for one, attacked deists for this very reason. (Many people who completed the census, I suspect, had not given the matter a great deal of thought, which is one reason why books like Roberts’ are welcome for opening up this religious debate and linking it to literary study.) But to devote too much time to this issue is to get side-tracked. The second half of this chapter is as illuminating, as alive to the spiritual complexities of the poetry of Blake and Wordsworth, as the rest of the book.

This book is doubly welcome, not just because it contributes to the much-needed debate concerning the relationship between religion and literary studies, but also because of its fresh and original approach to the subject. Furthermore, with the inclusion of an autobiographical narrative, Roberts encourages us to question some of the long-held notions of literary criticism: the supposed objectivity, the attention to fact, the attempts to exclude personal experience from any readings of literary texts. But reading literature is always a personal experience first and foremost, and Roberts’ book finds a successful way of acknowledging this, without sacrificing the notion that archival research, close reading of poetry and attention to historical and biographical facts are all integral parts of the same process.

Dr. John Dee's Spiritual Diary (1583-1608), being a completely new and reset edition of A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many yeeres between Dr. John Dee and some Spirits... With introduction, supplementary text, additional illustrations, timeline, corrections, notes, and appendices. Ed. Stephen Skinner. Singapore: Golden Hoard Press, 2011, 677 pp. ISBN 978-0-9557387-8-4.

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As is well known, John Dee was one of the most peculiar English intellectuals of the Elizabethan Renaissance. He started his career as a mathematician, collected England's largest private library, consulted a think tank of English discoverers and colonisers, and authored curious magical works that made him a name all over Europe. He travelled all across the continent and tried his fortune at the Prague court of Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor as well as in Cracow, before Stephen Batory, king of Poland. His notoriety emerged from his becoming disappointed in science and turning toward various forms of magic. For Dee, the most attractive magic was scrying, that is, contacting spirits by means of calling them up from a crystal ball. For these sessions he needed a helper, a scryer, whom he found in the person of Edward Kelley, a strange and exalted alchemist and possibly a parasite. The two conducted these angelic conversations with various purposes, ranging from the aspiration to gain information about the upcoming course of events to the desire to see apocalyptic visions. But Dr. Dee's ultimate goal was to learn the language of Adam from the angels, and thus be able to converse with God and learn the secrets of creation. What makes these angelic conversations an invaluable document of intellectual history is that Dee

meticulously noted down all these supernatural encounters, leaving behind hundreds of manuscript pages and thus documenting early modern spirit lore and magical practice.

There is no space here to tell about the fascinating fate of these manuscripts, so we shall only mention that they have luckily survived and are in the British Library and in the Bodleian, Oxford. Long after Dee's death, a considerable portion of the manuscripts got into the hands of the seventeenth-century antiquarian and early freemason, Elias Ashmole, and ultimately of Meric Casaubon, a humanist and theoretician of psychological enthusiasm. As a religious man, he interpreted Dee's efforts as a result of the trap of the devil, and as an early psychologist, he considered the angelic conversations to be a symptom of mental delusion. In order to warn against such dangers, he published Dee's spiritual diaries, containing the years 1583-1608. However, the Doctor had already started his angelic conversations in 1581; these early volumes with invaluable information about the genesis of this occult practice and the first results of the sessions were unknown to Casaubon. Similarly, Casaubon did not possess everything pertaining to the mentioned years, and later on (mostly in the twentieth century), other manuscripts popped up with additional material.

Until recently, the infamous Casaubon publication of 1659, *A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many yeers between Dr. John Dee and some Spirits...* was the main source material to study John Dee's ceremonial magic, since the remaining manuscripts were difficult to access and even more difficult to decipher. Unfortunately, Casaubon's edition is often faulty, since he left out certain parts and often failed to transcribe the original text correctly. Since the 1960s, numerous efforts have been made to publish Dee's spiritual diaries and magical handbooks and in this respect one could mention the names of C. H. Josten, Christopher Whitby, Geoffrey James, Clay Holden, and Edward Fenton. In spite of this, no unified and comprehensive scholarly edition was available until recently, with the useful work of Joseph H. Peterson and Stephen Skinner, who both have been known for some time as publishers and translators of a wide range of late medieval and early modern magical texts. In 2003 Peterson published Dee's first *Five Books of Mystery* (York Beach: Weiser), those volumes of the angelic conversations which were unknown to Casaubon. This is a careful edition, with translations of the original Latin, Greek and Hebrew insertions, and contains useful appendices to facilitate a complete picture about the genesis of Dee's ceremonial magic.

Recently Stephen Skinner took on an equally tantalising editorial task: to correct, complete, and republish Casaubon's edition and thus replace the incorrect facsimiles of the originally incorrect 1659 publication. The present edition is a beautiful and very impressive book. It includes Casaubon's original forty folio pages' preface, the text known in 1659, and the latterly discovered missing parts. This edition resolves the places that were incomprehensible for/misunderstood by the original editor. A number of important appendices contain contemporary opinions of Meric Casaubon, a vocabulary of frequent Latin phrases and locations, Elias Ashmole's seventeenth-century catalogue of Dee's works, a chronological summary of Dee's 1583-88 itinerary in Europe, and Joseph H. Peterson's table of contents to the first five manuscript volumes of the spiritual diaries. The majestic folio book is rich with illustrations, too.

It is not difficult to demonstrate the importance of this publication for the scholars of the English Renaissance as well as for those who study early modern Western esotericism. John Dee has also become a favourite character for today's novelists, playwrights, and even opera composers. It is good to have some solid historical-documentary material when exploring literary and artistic imaginings.