

Reviews and Notices

Björk, Lennart & Räsänen, Christine, Academic Writing. A University Writing Course. Lund: Studentlitteratur 1996. ISBN 91-44-60501-3. 400 pp. Price (paper): SEK 303 + moms.

It is a pleasure to welcome this book, for it fulfils a real need. Teaching students to write has become a growth industry, now that an unprecedented number of students come to university and cosy seminar work is giving way to independent thinking and reporting. At the same time, university teachers are becoming aware that students have to be trained to communicate: there is no longer time to let the process happen by osmosis.

Since the trend is American, and there is an enormous market for Freshman Composition coursebooks, there has been a lot to choose from; but for all of us teaching in English departments where English is a foreign language, this is where the problem is apparent: these books are devised for mothertongue speakers who need their bad habits pruned, and native American bad habits are not the same as Scandinavian students'. But surely the market for ESL writing could supply that need? Not really – these books are embarrassingly simple and obviously prepared for students whose fluency is less than ours. In this book, however, the focus is on writing as a *thinking* tool.

Academic Writing is a beginner's book with very few further-reading references. It starts out with a step-by-step guide to the text types found in expository writing, viz. causal analysis, proposals to solve problems, and argumentation. It is composed of non-fictional example texts which are then analysed to show how the principle works ("Improving your text-type awareness"), followed by an over-to-you section, which provides a course in process-oriented writing, with peer response and revision of drafts. Here again, drafts are analysed and good examples are provided of the sort of things that can be remarked upon and improved.

Then follow a couple of chapters on specific skills: that of summarising (so good to see a book that acknowledges that different text types need different kinds of summary) and that of creating coherence. The treatment of these two mirror-image skills clearly benefits from an underlying and never-mentioned basis in text-linguistics, besides the stable fare of composition textbooks; it is thus established that the coherence established in summarising is guided by the writers' purpose, and likewise, the skill in making a point at sentence, paragraph and text level can be looked at both as information structure and as the rhetorical relations of definition, exemplification, contrast and comparison etc.

The third part of the book is about *genres*, i.e. some of the texts that the student may be preparing for, notably "research papers" (ranging from literary term essays to technical project proposals) with advice on the writing process and on bibliography (do keep track of your references as you go along), and formal letters and job applications.

Academic Writing never lets on that it is essentially devised for an artificial situation – that of the student writing term papers in English merely for the sake of training; in principle it could be used in any English-speaking university. But in the end, any course planner is bound to ask about the cost-benefit balance: writing skills are thinking skills – so why complicate things by doing them in a foreign language, where weak vocabulary will be in the way of precise thinking and register discrimination and make the tone hard to judge for the writer?

With the example of the Swedish students applying for a job at a Swedish company in English the obvious answer is, "all the formalia would be the same if this was a Dutch or British or Italian firm". But with the more obvious composition-type examples, like "Why do we have increasing violence in Swedish society today?" the relevance for the recipient is a question that needs to be asked. Now that

most university language departments (I hope) have cottoned on to the fact that there is no such thing as a correct translation of a source text without accurate knowledge of the *communicative purpose* the translation is meant to serve, it is slightly iffy to ask students to write compositions for no purpose other than clear argumentation. Where I work I doubt if I could get away with such a task without specifying the situation that the exercise mimicked, like "You work for a subsidiary of a European corporation. The various personnel managers are holding a seminar in preparation for exchange of young trainees. They are concerned about what they hear of the rising violence in the Scandinavian countries, which have otherwise been considered safe and orderly. Write a presentation for them explaining why we witness increasing violence in Scandinavia today." Clearly, the issue of the recipients, the judgement exercised about their prior knowledge and the use they are supposed to put the presentation to, is now a clear indication of the quality of the presentation, rather than the formal coherence and paragraphing.

Again, there is a good answer to this objection: kill two birds with one stone, work in English in the hope that thinking in English is the same as mothertongue thinking, train the basic skills and correct possible faulty grammar and errant vocabulary separately (or in another course, seeing that trainee writers are very sensitive). And then go on to devise more realistic settings afterwards, or devise courses where the students' term papers or project reports from other courses get brought in for revision. This should certainly earn the students' gratitude, and possibly other course tutors' as well.

The upshot is that I am wary of a writing skills textbook that does not explicitly focus on the reader's needs, because it presents academic writing as not suited for real communication. But with this proviso I welcome a clear and easy textbook that can demonstrate basic skills in a manner that will clearly be useful for integration in further work, and I shall be glad to add it to the list of recommended books for courses at my home institution.

Anne Marie Bülow-Møller

Fjellestad, Danuta and Wikborg, Eleanor, Reading Texts: An Introduction to Strategies of Interpretation 196 pp. and *Reading Texts: Teaching Suggestions* 104 pp. Scandinavian University Press, 1995.

Danuta Fjellestad and Eleanor Wikborg's *Reading Texts: An Introduction to Strategies of Interpretation* and the complementary *Reading Texts: Teaching Suggestions* (Scandinavian University Press, 1995) offer opportunities for making university level study and teaching of texts from different genres more professional – more professional in the sense of grounding reading strategies and interpretation in contemporary, interdisciplinary, theories. Let me hasten to add, especially for those readers who feel that literary studies have been subjected to too much explicit theory in recent decades, that these books are by no means theory-heavy in any negative, obfuscating manner. On the contrary, the authors introduce, define and explain theoretical concepts in a helpful and constructive way to provide conceptual tools for effective reading strategies.

The student textbook has a two-fold aim: first, to help students become more self-reflexive as they practise and develop their interpretive abilities; and, second, with the help of concrete examples of different reading conventions, to help students see the dependence of textual analysis on cultural and institutional norms.

Literary genres provide most of the texts and exercises. In a wise pedagogical move, however, Fjellestad and Wikborg devote the first of the textbook's nine units to "The process of decoding cultural texts". By introducing basic concepts in semiotics – such as a sign, cultural codes and binary oppositions – they make the point that decoding processes are part and parcel of everyday life. The focus of this deceptively brief but essential introductory unit is on visual material, for instance a

family portrait, cigarette advertisements and Marilyn Monroe pictures. With the exercises – and with the help of teacher input stimulated by helpful hints in the *Teaching Suggestions* – students can become familiar with and internalise a number of central linguistic and interpretive concepts such as signifier, signified and defamiliarization, as they start considering the interplay and tension between idiosyncratic and culturally shared codes.

In “The rhetoric of reporting and persuasion in newspaper texts” and “The rhetoric of reporting and persuasion in history texts” (units three and four) the student is alerted to the presence of position taking and argumentation in apparently “objective” texts.

With “Literature and ‘reality’: the role of genre expectations” (unit four), the attention turns to the reading of literary texts and the student gets help to understand and recognise how the conventions of a literary genre create a “horizon of expectations” in a reader. In unit five, “The representation and the reading of gender and race” the authors raise the topical issues of gender and race in literary texts and interpretations of texts. The student reader here gets a chance of comparing a New Critical reading (Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren) of Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” (all of which is printed in the book) with two more recent interpretations, by Robert Crosman and Judith Fetterley, both of whom focus on gender issues. It is to the authors’ credit that they do not dismiss the earlier reading in any facile manner but also encourage the student to reflect on what happens to certain aspects of the story in the currently more politically correct readings from the 1980s. This open-mindedness characterises the whole book – without leaving the reader in any doubt as to its commitment to poststructuralist theories and practices.

In “Aspects of intertextuality and ideology” (unit six) Fjellestad and Wikborg provide material that will help the student become aware of problems and issues involved in considering the “uniqueness” or “originality” of literary works, i.e. the notion of intertextuality is introduced, and two excerpts, from Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe*, offer useful texts for discussion.

The authors have postponed the discussion of more traditional aspects of narrative – action, setting, time, character etc. – to unit 7. I read this as a deliberate move to help students free themselves from the kind of literary analysis they are likely to have met with and practised in secondary school – above all, perhaps, character analysis. Whether this is so or not, it strikes me as an excellent strategy. Having said that, I find this particular chapter less successful than the others. Titled “Aspects of narrative in fiction and film”, it asks students not only to take on conceptual tools for narratological analysis but also to consider different ways of “recoding prose narratives into a visual medium” (108), by comparing two excerpts from *The Great Gatsby* and *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* with scenes in the film versions. The result is too ambitious, too compressed, a chapter. Its bifocal aim prevents in my opinion sufficient attention to either of the two complex and very important areas.

Unit 8, “A plurality of readings: what makes an interpretation acceptable”, offers wideranging and potentially eye-opening exercises in the problematics of evaluation of criticism. The chapter pedagogically warms up the student reader by asking him or her to read, compare and evaluate three very brief comments on Wordsworth’s “A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal” before they engage in assessing longer critical excerpts on Emily Dickinson’s “My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –”.

The final chapter addresses “The Question of Value”. The student reader now considers this complex question in the contexts of cultural institutions and “reading communities”. It is not difficult to see the pedagogical – and political – progression of the book here, for if the student takes advantage of the opportunities to engage in close reading and reflection on the individual ideological and critical assumptions that he or she has brought to the reading and exercises in the preceding units, the resulting “self-awareness”, the authors are quite justified in assuring the student, “empowers you to question other interpretations”.

An exemplary “Glossary” and annotated “Suggestions for Further Reading”

complete this outstanding textbook. The glossary, described as “essayistic” by the authors, contains extended definitions in essay form of concepts that are relevant to most of the units – for instance, *binary oppositions*, *canon*, *code*, *discourse*, *feminist and gender studies*, *genre*, *ideology*, *interpretation*, *intertextuality* and *rhetoric*. The glossary is pedagogically integrated in the student-activating educational policy of the textbook. For instance, at the end of each unit there is a reference to the glossary for the most important concepts dealt with in the unit so that students can consult the larger theoretical frameworks for the specific issues raised.

The companion volume for teachers, *Teaching Suggestions*, is a highly valuable source of ideas for using the student textbook effectively in the classroom. Addressing colleagues is always a sensitive matter and the authors are clearly aware of this. They tactfully present analyses and suggestions in the guise of sharing typical student reactions, queries and concerns. In the process Fjellestad and Wikborg manage to provide constructive in-service-training for university teachers not as familiar with poststructuralist theories and reading practices as they are themselves.

Reading Texts: An Introduction to Strategies of Interpretation is an ambitious textbook that does not underestimate student interpretive abilities. As such it offers exceptional opportunities for students to grow and to extend their reading skills. *Reading Texts: Teaching Suggestions* provides excellent ideas and unobtrusive advice for the teaching of all kinds of texts. Well used, the two books can ease access to contemporary theories and interpretive practices that will stimulate, expand and professionalise textual analysis in the university.

Lennart Björk

Svartvik, Jan & Sager, Olof, **Engelsk universitetsgrammatik**. Second edition 1996. ISBN 91-21-16418-5. 496 pp. Price (F): SEK 310.

Svartvik Jan, Sager, Olof & Hargevik, Stieg, **Engelsk universitetsgrammatik. Övningsbok**. Second edition 1997. ISBN 91-21-16903-9. 56 pp. Price (F): SEK 89.

When this university grammar was published in 1977 it quickly became the standard textbook at Swedish universities and it still has no strong competitors. The little competition there is comes from abroad (Johansson & Lysvåg 1991) and from “below”, where secondary school grammars creep into universities on the beginners’ levels (Svartvik & Sager 1991, Ljung & Ohlander 1992). It is thus a highly successful book that now goes into its second edition after 19 years on the market, and its authors have obviously felt that there has been little need for a major revision. In fact, remarkably few changes have been made. This has made it possible to keep the chapter and section numbers the same, although very occasionally the letter marking of subsections has been changed slightly (so that due to deletions the old 49 E is now 49 D and the old 332 F is now 332 E).

There is also a new edition of the exercise book. Here the greatest difference is that for the first time a key is provided (for the old edition, only unauthorized pirate keys were in circulation). The number of translation sentences is reduced somewhat, and the book is reorganized in a way that has changed the chapter and sentence numbering considerably. The contents and the Swedish phraseology are simplified or modernized rather more than in the grammar itself. Modification of individual sentences has been done in a way similar to that described below for the grammar book. The key gives relatively few variants and no extra references and it seems to be intended mainly for use in combination with classroom teaching rather than individual study.

In the following, references are to sections in the grammar and to chapters and sentences in the exercise book.

Explanations

In their preface, the authors claim that they have improved the grammatical expla-

nations, and there are some instances of this. An example is the treatment of the ordering of adjectives in 128, which has been partly rewritten so that the difference between phrases like *a little red cottage* and *a nice little dog* is much better explained than before. In 90, the distinction between the present subjunctive and the *should* construction is made clearer.

On a few points there has been a development in English which has called for revision of the prescriptive rules. Dealing with *play* + the name of a musical instrument in 175, the authors add the verbs “*practise, learn etc.*” and then go on to mention that about jazz and pop music you can also say *play drums* etc. This is more up to date than the old rule, even though one might argue that the use of the definitive article is a question of register rather than subject matter. Further examples of changed usage are 296, where the marker <AmE> has been taken away from the use of *one billion* for 1,000,000,000, and 299, where a decimal point on the line (rather than raised) is now given as the only variant. The treatment of *penny* (156 F) is also rewritten (modernized).

Often the change entails deletion of information that has been judged superfluous. The treatment of *dare* and *need*, for instance, has been cut down considerably. 56 A & B are now just 56, 57 A–D have become 57 A–C (with the mentioning of mixed forms, blends, in the old 57 B left out). 58 B has been dropped. Other instances of deletion include: 5 (second half of the section), 17 H (deletion of reference to ellipsis), 25 C (fine print passage).

I have only found one case of changed terminology. Under the heading Relative Clauses, the old edition mentioned three types of clauses: restrictive relative clauses, non-restrictive relative clauses and adverbial relative clauses (for cases like: This is the place where the accident was). This last term has now been abandoned and the heading of section 133 simply reads: *Where/Why*.

One of the major improvements is that an alphabetical listing of irregular verbs has been added, surely a welcome service to readers who earlier had to search through all the different classes, or go via the index at the back of the book. Apart from this, only minor modifications have been introduced in the irregular verbs sections (like the deletion of *wind* (= blow (a trumpet) and *behold*, and the inclusion of *withhold*).

In the wording of the explanations there are very few changes, but one notices that the slightly dated Swedish term *modest* has been modernized into *försiktig* (cf. 26 C).

Pronunciation is now, very reasonably, given according to Wells (1990). The useful bibliography at the end is all new, referring the reader almost exclusively to titles from the 80s and 90s, up to 1996.

Examples

Examples in grammar books often give a picture of the era they were written in (cf. Ohlander 1995 for an amusing treatment of this). If the examples are too topical they are also likely to make the book dated rather quickly. While striving to be contemporary and up to date, the *EUG* avoided this trap from the start and the authors have now gone to some lengths to stay even clearer of it. One would have thought that the Swedish downhill skier Ingemar Stenmark could have been allowed to stay in the grammar, as he does in the hearts of most Swedes, but (1) below has been changed into (1a) in the new edition. Similarly, a certain statesman of the past has been written out of history in (2a):

- (1) Stenmark *glides* effortlessly down the piste...
- (1a) The champion *glides* effortlessly down the piste... (102 B)
- (2) Mao's record was unrivalled by that of any other Chinese political leader.
- (2a) His record was unrivalled by that of any other political reader. (93 D)

It warms the heart that Freud is allowed to live on in 53.

Political correctness might have something to do with (2), as it has with the treatment of smoking. In the 90s, smoking must not be mentioned: in a series of examples in 60 B smoking a pipe has been turned into reading comics, and in the exercise book a packet of Prince cigarettes has been censored in 5:32, whereas smoking hash has been softened to just smoking in 31:10. Also in the exercise book, it is now deemed more appropriate to buy flowers for one's wife than for one's secretary, as one did in the old days and in the old book (7:21). That *utvecklingsländernas* (of the developing countries) has been changed into *många länders* (of many countries) in (3) has perhaps more to do with real world developments, just like the introduction of computers and CD-ROM players instead of typewriters and record players:

- (3) Ekonomin är många länders stora problem. (9:27)

Some examples have disappeared altogether, for these or other reasons, cf. (4) – (7):

- (4) Will that be all, sir? (26)
- (5) a barber's shop (även: a barber shop) “en frisörsalong” (127 C)
- (6) Denmark's *cradle-to-grave social-welfare system* (127 D)
- (7) a détente policy “avspänningspolitik” – a policy of détente (134 C)

In 121 B a fairly long example referring to the bicentenary of the French revolution in 1989 has been deleted, presumably to avoid the dated reference, and similarly the *Soviet Union* and the *USSR* (330) have had to go.

More rarely, example sentences or words have been added, like the whole of (8):

- (8) In such circumstances it was only natural that the doctrines of international law would come under attack. (35)

The Swedish in the translations of the English examples is rich, varied and for the most part idiomatic. In some cases the English example has got a new rendering, as when the old translation of *She is a mother to be*, “blivande mor” has been improved as “Hon ska bli mamma” (141), although in my idiolect “Hon är med barn” would have been even better. The rather unidiomatic translation of *She works half-time* by “Hon har halv tjänst” (304 C) has been complemented with the closer translation “arbetar halvtid”. One would have wished for the retirement of yet a few more translations, like the one for a *Texas-bound plane* in 143 A: “ett till Texas destinerat flygplan”.

Typography

The text has been reset in a more modern typography. The margins are a few millimetres narrower, but the text itself gives a slightly lighter impression. Some tables have been altered, like 343 which has been turned 90 degrees – certainly a change for the worse: who wants to turn a book sideways if you don't have to? The table of contents is 8 pages long, far too detailed and far too spaciouly set. The reader should not have to leaf through 8 pages to scan the contents of a book which has a good index.

It is surprising that the authors and publishers have kept the incorrectly used English single quotation marks in the Swedish text throughout (in Swedish text, the left quotation mark should *not* be inverted – cf. *Svenska skrivregler...* (1991, §213)).

Apart from this, both books are meticulously proof-read and I have found very few misprints. In 38, however, FURIOUS should be FURious (since only stressed syllables are capitalized here), and in 108 A brackets are missing, so that the relation between the example sentences is not clear (should be like in the old edition). Also space is inserted here between the wrong examples.

Conclusion

The new edition of the *EUG* constitutes a decent bringing up to date of a well-tryed, practical learning tool and reference work. It will not please those critics of the old edition who wanted to see a little more of grammatical theory and a little less of cluttered usage information bordering on the lexicon, but it will certainly make the book live on well into the 21st century. The exercise book, with its slightly more thorough-going modernization of examples and its new key, may even win some new adherents.

Hans Lindquist

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Bennett, Andrew and Royle, Nicholas, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995. 230 pp. ISBN 0-13-355215-2.

Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle's *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* is a lucid and fascinating book which presents contemporary modes of how to read literary texts critically and imaginatively. The authors are quite ingenious in simultaneously explicating literary theory and rhetorically embodying it in their own style of writing. This doubling up of what is conceptually and compositionally at stake is everywhere in their work, and it is executed with a high degree of poise and intelligence.

The book's straightforward title and preface's explicit statements quickly verge off into several directions as soon as one encounters the table of contents. I was intrigued and delighted to see chapter headings such as "The beginning", "The uncanny", "Voice", "Me", "Secrets", "Pleasure" and "The end" amongst what might be considered traditional headings such as "Readers and reading", "The author", "Narrative", "Character", and "Ideology". This seemingly curious juxtaposition deftly stages and subverts common notions of literary status, critical propriety, and, in a subtle way, it underscores the compositional nature of the book's power and fictionality.

The expository movement of *An Introduction to Literature* begins with a question: "When will we have begun?" (1), a kind of syntactic knuckle ball that is hard to catch. Relevant to the authors' critical focus on new ways of reading, one is compelled to read this phrase one more time, and in a new way if another kind of sense is to be achieved. This is a future perfect beginning that portentously looks towards what is near the book's end, namely the Jean-François Lyotard quote which appears in chapter 22: "that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. . . the artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*. Hence the fact that work and text have the characters of an *event*" (185).

An Introduction to Literature is just as much an event as it is an exposition. The authors' chapter headings and initial question are ways of creating a new presentation which alludes to what is ultimately the unrepresentable quality of literature.

Individually, each chapter functions as if it were a contribution at a symposium about what will have been read when it is read a new. For instance, in Chapter 16 the authors offer a compelling insight about the ideological underpinnings which structure Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter". Their discussion first articulates the unstated agenda of the mystery/resolution mode of reading. They remark how Poe's story "involves the re-establishment of power relations, the assertion of the culprit as autonomous and independent, and the implementation of reason to restore the status quo" (135). A second stage commentary, however, overtakes this articulation and poses a more complex legibility. According to Bennett and Royle, Poe's character Dupin is able to find and return the stolen letter to its owner because Dupin "in some ways is identical to the criminal" (135). They are referring to Dupin's ability to think and act as if he were the criminal, which at the moment of resolution casts Dupin as a criminal himself. Consequently, "a restoration of the status quo and reinforcement of an absolute distinction between criminal and non-criminal, may be undermined" (135). This kind of oscillation in Dupin's fictive role is emblematic of how "sites of conflict and difference, places where values and preconceptions, beliefs and prejudices. . . may be produced and, finally, transformed" (136). What results from the readings Bennett and Royle offer is a suspended opening in the midst of what formerly seemed like a final conclusion.

Every chapter cultivates an equally startling misrecognition of critical givens and precipitates alternate meanings. This rather unconventional approach to literary studies, however, successfully avoids the traps of impenetrable jargon or airbrush intellectualism, which commonly plagues studies with similar ambitions. The chapters present clear objectives which are theoretically developed and critically demonstrated. This is an invaluable combination from a pedagogical standpoint. And since the book is not structured on a cumulative build up of information and illustrations, chapters could be read selectively, randomly or sequentially, which ideally suits it to a range of course aims and requirements.

I am very enthusiastic about this book even when I perhaps should be less so. The point I want to make here is there are instances where rhetorical slippages and disturbances occur which cause me to momentarily pause in disbelief. I will give two examples of what I mean by rhetorical slippages and disturbances.

The first set of slippages appear on page one. After the phantasmagoric opening "When will we have begun?", the authors nevertheless construct a beginning by stating "The only way to begin is with some literary texts. John Milton's great epic poem *Paradise Lost* begins by returning to the beginning" (1). To my mind, by stating "the only way to begin" undercuts the undecidability of beginnings that the authors so artfully figure in the first paragraph. "Why this reduction, why this reversal," I ask myself. On the other hand, could this "only way to begin" be a joke, is it meant to be ironic, or is it in some sense parodic of critical beginnings of the past (which might be considered a kind of paradise, now lost)? I am stumped so I am sent back to the first paragraph to look for a possible sign that forewarns of an impending tone of either irony or parody. I do not find such a sign and I am slightly confused, but I have been engaged in the process of beginning again.

The other disturbance here is the adjective "great", which is used to describe *Paradise Lost*. This adjective of honorable distinction seems misplaced in an introductory line which assumes a critical beginning, a position before evaluative conclusions. In the context of their particular analysis, Milton's *Paradise Lost* is being assessed for its thematic relevance to beginnings and its possible intertextual beginnings in other texts. So why employ this adjective as an imperative evocation of the literary canon? Is "great" a slip or does "great" deliberately and intertextually refer to other critical histories, which is another type of beginning?

The second set of slippages I would like to momentarily dwell on can be found

in Chapter 8. Here Bennett and Royle concentrate on "the idea of voice" (57). They develop an intriguing argument about the dynamic relationship between identity and voice and how fictional identity is structured by the familiarity and strangeness of voice. An example of the strangeness of voices is given by citing a passage from Raymond Chandler's *The Little Sister*. Marlowe, the protagonist, picks up the phone: "The voice I heard was an abrupt voice, but thick and clogged, as if it was being strained through a curtain or somebody's long white beard" (58). The point the authors make is this: "literary texts present us with possible experiences of the extraordinary effects of voice" (59). My question is whether the Chandler passage is so much a matter of extraordinary effect of voice or is it a marvellous use of tropes. To me, the idea of stylistic signature seems more persuasive than the idea of voice in this passage from *The Little Sister*. On the other hand, Bennett and Royle's narrative voice in this chapter about voice, is strangely familiar and becomes recognizable through the authors' extended assumptions: "the question of voice is never simple, even (or perhaps especially) when it appears to be. Second, and more specifically, . . . literary texts not only *present* voices but also have things to say *about* what voices are and how we might or might not hear them. Third, there is invariably more than one voice in a literary text, even if it is a matter of a voice ostensibly just talking or responding to itself" (63). The literary qualities of Bennett and Royle's writing are obvious, so it is not surprising that I am uncertain whose voice I hear and do not hear in the Marlowe commentary.

What I have been marking as slippages or disturbances in the text ought not to be considered flaws by any means. To me they are moments of postmodern pleasure. Viewed from another perspective, these interludes might be called logical discrepancies. Using the authors' own postmodern vocabulary, I would prefer to call them arational, non-teleological moments which defy the dichotomy between error and profundity.

I am convinced that Bennett and Royle have written a path-breaking book. The annotated Further Reading sections at the end of each chapter are succinct and exceptionally relevant. The Glossary gives concise definitions of key critical terms, and the Bibliography is a treasure chest of titles in theory and critical inquiry. All of these factors will undoubtedly benefit students and teachers. But I suspect that this book will have an appeal beyond a strictly academic audience. Anything that is so full of laughter, suspense, secrets, and pleasures knows no bounds.

Alan Shima

Richard Appignanesi and Chris Garratt with Ziauddin Sardar and Patrick Curry, **Postmodernism for Beginners**. Cambridge: Icon, 1995. 176 pp. ISBN 1-874166-21-8 (paperback).

Jerome Rothenberg and Pierre Joris (eds), **Poems for the Millennium: The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry, Volume one**. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995. 811 pp. ISBN 0-520-07227-8 (paperback).

What do karaoke, cyberspace and a morbid fascination with serial killers have in common? Are they signs that we are in a recession of reality? Are they symptoms of an endlessly contemporary, post-industrial culture which turns art and knowledge into commodities and can only parasitically cannibalize the already experienced in frivolous forms such as irony and pastiche? *Postmodernism for Beginners* may not answer these questions but it does provide an insightful and fairly comprehensive (albeit modest) overview of the ever-more-frequent term used to describe our cultural condition in the late twentieth century.

As one might deduce from the title, this book is not for the rigidly academic; it is one of Icon's series of "graphic study guides" whose overriding aesthetic principle is to marry scholarly subjects with cartoon-like illustrations – a lively and play-

ful format which fits this particular topic perfectly. Naturally, combining this format with the enormity of the subject requires a good deal of simplification and idealization which in itself sometimes seems typical of postmodern impatience without depth – like much of postmodernism itself, however, depth and surface are elusive concepts.

The provocative and often controversial ideas of any of the major thinkers in *Postmodernism for Beginners* (eg Derrida, Foucault, Saussure, Baudrillard, Lyotard, Fukuyama, Kristeva, Lacan, Barthes, Wittgenstein, among others) could fill entire (if not several) books in themselves so it is not surprising that the book indulges in oversimplifications – on page 109, for example, "chaos" (as in Chaos Theory) is simply defined as "a kind of order without periodicity". For the most part, however, the idealization and simplification found here are not completely unjustified since the ways of viewing postmodernism are not exactly the same for those interested in architecture, literary theory, art, sociology or philosophy and it is hard to see how these strands could be brought together coherently otherwise. *Postmodernism for Beginners* does not proclaim to be an authoritative, detailed work on the subject but rather it provides a radically condensed but above all *accessible* and entertaining introduction to postmodernism without grossly misrepresenting the subject or patronizing the reader. The overview presented here may not be substantial enough for the expert but it is surely sufficient for undergraduate students (of literature or art for example) who are curious as to how the concept may be related to other academic fields.

Oversimplification may be a possible weak spot in *Postmodernism for Beginners*, but it is certainly not an issue in the mammoth-sized volume *Poems for the Millennium*. Rothenberg and Joris's mega-anthology covers poetry from the beginnings of modernism to the middle of the 1940s and, rather than highlighting a few major figures from Europe or America, it includes many different authors and has a distinctly international perspective. The two most striking organizational features of the work are the "galleries" of individual poets (in these there is no stress on interconnections between poems – a kind of modernist collage in itself) and samplings which are arranged into different movements such as Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, Surrealism, Objectivism and Negritude. Each movement is preceded by a brief but helpful prologue by the editors who throughout the book provide informative and stimulating commentaries. The poems are often complemented by notes and sketches by the authors which, along with the idea presenting poems in "galleries", adds an "intermedia" quality to the book that helps to wipe out rigid distinctions between poets and painters and sculptors and performers. Indeed, several of the poems here were written by artists who are not primarily recognized for poetry – Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Marcel Duchamp, among others.

One complication with the book is that all the non-English poems are translated into English and translations of poetry are always – well, translations of poetry. This obvious drawback is outweighed by the possibilities of this unique collection to make many different poems from different languages accessible to a wide audience who can then examine all the works in the light of the various influences and underlying currents at work in the production of poetry in the first half of this century. Once a broader picture is seen, the implicit questions which become clear to the reader are: "what is the poetry canon really?" and "why are some poems anthologized time and time again while others are overlooked?" In this connection it is interesting to note that the icon of modernist poetry, namely Eliot's *Wasteland*, is not reprinted here – the poem is commented upon and the reader is referred to other collections.

The philosophy used in gathering the material for this anthology is probably its most intriguing aspect: "The form of the work we have assembled is that of a synthesizing and global anthology of twentieth century modernism with an emphasis on international and national movements that have tried to change the direction of poetry and art as a necessary condition for changing the way in which we think and

act as human beings". The result is quite impressive – this is not an ordinary anthology or an attempt to compile an "alternative" canon. It is more like a catalogue of innovations or an exhibition of works which celebrate the creative process.

Joe Trotta

Lubbers, Klaus. *Born For The Shade: Stereotypes of the Native American in United States Literature and the Visual Arts, 1776-1894.* Amsterdam Monographs in American Studies, Amsterdam-Atlanta. GA 1994. 320 pp. ISBN: 90-5183-628-7 (CIP). USD 90.

In his book *Born For The Shade* Klaus Lubbers has explored new areas of American culture – such as the Independence Day Ritual – by tracking down and comparing motifs in such diverse cultural documents as primers, peace medals and poems. He calls his approach to this material "cultural analysis", his interest lying in the message these documents transmit to him about the poet's or the painter's particular social group.

Most of the documents referred to in this book were produced in the American Republic during its formative phase, a time when the nation engaged itself in a long process of selfconceptualization, and of adjusting the elements of this evolving ideological system to rapid territorial expansion and social change.

The author is seeking to understand the "genesis and development, the kind and quality, the logic and argumentation of thinking about Native Americans as expressed in Euro-American works of the imagination".

In other words: how the attitude of the "New American" towards the Native Americans is revealed in expository prose – the Fourth of July Orations, essays and juvenile literature, also in the Arts, covering peace medals, documentary art, painting and sculpture and finally in Belles Letters, i.e. poetry, drama and fiction.

From all these aspects, it is clear that, during the period 1776-1894, there may have been many who felt "there was something wrong with the way Native Americans were treated both in reality and in works of the imagination but failed to extricate themselves from their own clichés".

"The white man is born for the sunshine, the red man for the shade" – this is an example of ethnic stereotyping which continues even today: In March 1996, landowners in Guatemala strongly resisted but failed to prevent the ratification of an international convention on the rights of native peoples.

As Lubbers states: "What is needed is a shift of perception and attitudes from ethnocentrism to polycentrism; and that may yet take a long time".

Born For The Shade is recommended as being of general interest; it helps to shed light on how people see people; a question which we in Europe, with our own influx of ethnic minorities, are facing.

For those with a special interest in American literature covering the period from the Declaration of Independence to the closing of the frontier, "this volume examines the ways in which attempts to define and delimit American nationhood effected imaginative and documentary conceptualizations of the Native American population".

Wendy Henningsson

Reimann, Brigitte / Wolf, Christa, *Sei begrüßt und lebe. Eine Freundschaft in Briefen 1964-1973.* Hg. von Angela Drescher. Berlin und Weimar: Aufbau, 1997 (Sonderausgabe). 190 Seiten.

Christa Wolf ist eine der wenigen auch international bekannten literarischen „Größen“ Deutschlands, mit Büchern wie „Nachdenken über Christa T.“ oder „Kassan-

dra“ hat sie sich in die Literaturgeschichte eingeschrieben. Auch ihr letzter Roman „Medea. Stimmen“ (1996) ist vom Publikum begeistert aufgenommen worden; weniger von der Literaturkritik, die wohl politisch motivierte Vorbehalte hatte. Schließlich hatte man von ihr, etwas zugespitzt formuliert, den großen Roman über die deutsche Teilung oder wenigstens eine Abrechnung mit der DDR erwartet. Verglichen mit Christa Wolf ist Brigitte Reimann weniger bekannt, doch waren ihre Werke, vor allem der ganz und gar nicht linientreue, 1974 posthum erschienene Roman „Franziska Linkerhand“, in der DDR sehr populär.

Ist damit aber bereits ein größeres Interesse an der privaten Korrespondenz der beiden gerechtfertigt? Wenn solch persönliche Zeugnisse einer Freundschaft noch zu Lebzeiten eines der Korrespondenzpartner in einem großen Verlag publiziert werden, muß es dafür besondere Gründe geben, die über das rein germanistische Motiv hinausgehen, daß die Briefe dazu beitragen, die Biographie und das literarische Werk der Schriftstellerinnen zu erhellen.

Im vorliegenden Fall handelt es sich tatsächlich um mehr als eine Quellensammlung für Germanisten. Der Schriftwechsel deckt vor allem die letzten vier Lebensjahre von Brigitte Reimann ab (1969-1973) und ist daher voller Tragik. Viele Leser werden sich mit der bis zuletzt gegen ihr Krebsleiden kämpfenden Frau identifizieren können oder von ihrer stets optimistischen Haltung beeindruckt sein. Als weitere Begründung kann man die ganz simple Feststellung treffen, daß die meisten Briefe glänzend geschrieben sind und teilweise essayistischen Charakter haben. (Dem an Zeitgeschichte interessierten Leser werden noch andere Dinge auffallen - dazu später mehr.)

Den ersten Briefen fehlt noch der spätere Zauber. Christa Wolf und Brigitte Reimann haben sich 1963 auf einer Moskauer - Reise kennengelernt und tauschen zunächst, in größeren Abständen, Informationen und Glückwünsche aus. Die Bekanntschaft intensiviert sich erst 1969 und wird mit der Anteilnahme Christa Wolfs am Krebsleiden ihrer Briefpartnerin zu einer tiefen Freundschaft. Denn trotz des gegensätzlichen Lebenswandels stimmen die beiden in ihren wichtigsten Grundanschauungen überein. Für beide dürfte der enge briefliche Kontakt sehr wichtig gewesen sein, wenn auch Christa Wolf meistens die Gebende ist. Sie hilft Reimann im Kampf mit der tückischen Krankheit, macht ihr Mut, sich wieder an einen Mann zu binden, spornet sie zur Arbeit an, ist ihr Stütze in der schwierigsten, der letzten Phase des Lebens. Ohne Christa Wolfs Ermahnungen wäre vielleicht, diesen Schluß lassen die Briefe zu, Reimanns bekannter und nicht mehr ganz fertiggewordener Roman „Franziska Linkerhand“ nur ein wenig beachtenswertes Fragment geblieben.

Der Briefwechsel ist aber auch ein wichtiges Dokument zur Aufarbeitung der jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit. Er erhellt ganz nebenbei die politische Position von Christa Wolf, die man nach der Wiedervereinigung in einem bundesweiten Literaturstreit für die Misere der DDR abgestraft hatte. (Dieser zeitgeschichtlich wichtige Schlagabtausch ist in einer sehr lesenswerten Publikation dokumentiert worden: Thomas Anz, Hg.: Es geht nicht um Christa Wolf. Der Literaturstreit im vereinigten Deutschland. Frankfurt/Main: Fischer 1995. 288 S.) Dem an solchen politischen Zusammenhängen Interessierten wird mit dem Briefwechsel die Möglichkeit gegeben, sich in die schwierige Position der Schriftstellerin hineinzusetzen und sich zu fragen, was sie hätte anders machen können. Man wird, jedenfalls auf der Basis dieser Publikation, zu dem Ergebnis kommen müssen: wenig bis nichts.

Im behandelten Zeitraum hat vor allem der Roman „Nachdenken über Christa T.“ Christa Wolf viel Ärger eingebracht. Das mutige Plädoyer für Individualismus und Selbstverwirklichung ist laut Brigitte Reimann so gedeutet worden: „Christa T. ist an der Gesellschaft gestorben, die Leukämie ist bloß ein Symbol.“ Und das Manuskript eines Wolf-Aufsatzes kommentiert Reimann mit den Worten: „Übrigens wirst Du wieder einen Haufen Leute aufregen.“ Auch muß man fragen, ob folgende Feststellung Christa Wolfs, die sich oft genug selbstkritisch zu ihrer Arbeit und deren Wirkungsmöglichkeiten geäußert hat, nicht eine verständliche Position einer Hausfrau und Mutter in ihrer Zeit und Gesellschaft darstellt: „Zu leben, und mög-

lichst nicht gar zu sehr gegen den eigenen Strich zu leben, das heißt zu arbeiten und ein paar Leute daran teilhaben zu lassen, ist die einzige Art von Tapferkeit, die ich heute sehe."

Aus allen Briefen spricht Menschlichkeit und Bescheidenheit, die manchem hoch zu Roß sitzenden Literaturpapst (vgl. den „Literaturstreit“) auch gut zu Gesicht stehen würde. Mit Christa Wolf gesprochen: „Ich glaube, daß es darauf ankommt, sich menschlich zu sich selbst und zu anderen zu verhalten, auf nichts anderes.“ Und: „Nur zu schreiben, wenn man sich für eine Jahrhundertfigur halten kann, ist blanker Hochmut und führt zu Sterilität.“

Neben der menschlichen Spannung, der zeitgeschichtlichen Bedeutung und dem großen Erfolg bei den Lesern - 1993 erstmals aufgelegt, ist als fünfte Auflage 1997 eine preiswerte Sonderausgabe erschienen - gibt es noch einen ganz einfachen Grund, weshalb man den Briefwechsel Reimann-Wolf lesen sollte. Besser als Christa Wolf, die am 5.2.69 auf eine oberflächliche Kritik an Brigitte Reimanns Buchprojekt reagierte, kann man diesen Grund nicht formulieren: „...vielleicht spricht ein Mensch ehrlich über Erfahrungen, die ihm möglich oder nötig oder wichtig waren: Was kann man mehr erhoffen?“

Stefan Neuhaus

Opitz, Stephan (Hrsg.): **Interkulturelle Kompetenz Skandinavien-Deutschland. Ein Handbuch für Fach- und Führungskräfte.** Mit Beiträgen von skandinavischen und deutschen Wissenschaftlern und Wirtschaftspraktikern. Düsseldorf: Raabe, 1997

Wie Stephan Opitz in den Vorbemerkungen zu dem hier besprochenen Buch schreibt, erfreut sich das Thema „Interkulturelle Kommunikation“ jetzt im Fremdsprachenunterricht, in Managementseminaren und Business Schools einer großen Beliebtheit. Diese Nachfrage nach interkultureller Kommunikation bringt natürlich einen akuten Bedarf an entsprechender Kompetenz zum Ausdruck. Manager im internationalen Handel müssen Fremdsprachen beherrschen, und sie müssen den soziokulturellen Hintergrund des ausländischen Handelspartners kennen.

Als Fremdsprachendozent und Sprachforscher stellt man sich immer wieder die Fragen, was ist „Kultur“, was sind „Interkulturelle Kommunikation“ und „Interkulturelle Kompetenz“? Gibt es Modelle für ihre Beschreibung, und welche Erscheinungen haben Relevanz für den speziellen Bereich Wirtschaftskommunikation? Auch dieses Buch gibt keine einfachen Antworten, aber es geht das Thema aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven an.

Was interkulturelle Kompetenz ist, und wie man sich zum Beispiel gegenüber Vorurteilen, Stereotypen und Ethnozentrismus verhalten soll, wird von vielen Verfassern problematisiert. Wenn Tor Anundsen sagt: „Ich muß meine Eindrücke an dem Wertesystem messen, das ich selbst in bezug auf die norwegische Kultur habe“ (S. 163), dann teilt er uns mit, daß seine Eindrücke von der norwegischen Sehweise gefärbt sind (Ethnozentrismus).

Auch das Ziel des interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterrichts wird mehrmals diskutiert. Soll man eine Art „chamäleonhaftes Verhalten an den Tag legen“, oder soll man vor allem ein „Bewußtsein für kulturelle Eigenheiten“ entwickeln (Koch/Rossenbeck, S. 86; vgl. Vahsen, S.38)? In diesem Zusammenhang berichten Brynielsson/Svensson aus ihrem Alltag von einem - scheinbar gelungenen - Versuch zur Übernahme einer skandinavischen Geschäftspraxis. Die deutschen Kooperationspartner hatten gesagt: „Laßt uns auf schwedische Weise arbeiten Das bedeutet, daß wir keine Briefe schreiben, wie wir es in Deutschland täten, sondern miteinander telefonieren, so daß es weniger formell wird“ (S. 118).

Das Buch wendet sich an deutsche und skandinavische Leser, wobei „Skandinavier“ weit gefaßt ist. Forschungsergebnisse, Erlebtes und Anekdotisches stehen ne-

beneinander, insgesamt ein reiches Inventar für den interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht. Die 14 Artikel sind Resultat einer Zusammenarbeit zwischen Managementspezialisten und Sprachdozenten, Wissenschaftlern und Praktikern, Deutschen, Dänen, Finnen, Norwegern und Schweden, viele von ihnen Mitarbeiter am Nordkolleg Rendsburg, das Kurse in diesem Bereich anbietet. Das Buch hat drei Teile:

1. Interkulturelle Probleme und Management

Nationale Merkmale, geschichtlicher Hintergrund und daraus entstehende Unterschiede in Unternehmensführung und öffentlicher Verwaltung werden behandelt. Die Verfasser sind Stephan Opitz, Werner Heinrichs und Grete Vahsen.

2. Sprache, Sprechen, Lernen, Kommunikation

In diesem Teil wird der interkulturelle Fremdsprachenunterricht fokussiert. Unterrichtskonzepte und viel nützliches Wissen über Sprache und Wirtschaft werden dargestellt. Die Verfasser sind hochqualifizierte Germanisten mit „Fachsprache Wirtschaft für Ausländer“ als Spezialgebiet. Sie lehren in Dänemark (Wolfgang Koch), Deutschland (Inke Boye), Norwegen (Kerstin Laue, Egil Schanke) und Schweden (Klaus Rossenbeck).

3. Interkulturelle Praxisberichte

Praktiker aus Wirtschaft, Politik und Verwaltung im Nordsee- und Ostseeraum präsentieren Kooperationsprogramme und bringen Beispiele aus ihrem Alltag. Die Verfasser sind: Sven Aage Olsen (Dänemark), Wolf Rüdiger Janzen und Gerd Walter (Deutschland), Seppo Tuominen (Finnland), Tore Anundsen (Norwegen), und schließlich Håkan Brynielsson/ Åse Svensson und Agneta Gisslow/Kare Hellstöm (Schweden).

Themen

Aus dem reichhaltigen Themenkatalog seien hier erwähnt:

- Nationale Identität Das Deutschlandbild von Skandinavien und das Skandinavienbild von Deutschen.
- Managementtraditionen Hierarchie, Status und Abstand.
- Unterschiede in der kommunalen Verwaltung zwischen Deutschland und Schweden.
- Geschäftspraktiken Kontaktabbau, Terminverabredung, Auftrags- und Zahlungsbedingungen, Normen und Bestimmungen, Auswirkung verschiedener Traditionen auf Produkte, Reklamationen, Verhalten bei Unzufriedenheit, Geselligkeit bei Geschäftsbesuchen.
- Sprache und Verhalten Englisch als Lingua franca, besondere Schwierigkeiten der deutschen Sprache, Skandinavischer „Singsang“ und deutsche „harte“ Lautung, Anrede, Titel und Namensnennung, das DU als „Intimfaktor“ (S. 130).

Das Handbuch „Interkulturelle Kompetenz“ ist somit ein nützliches Buch, sowohl für den Wirtschaftspraktiker als auch für Studenten und Dozenten an Hochschulen und Universitäten. Im Sinne der linguistischen Pragmatik zeigt es den engen Zusammenhang zwischen Sprache und beruflicher Tätigkeit. Die Texte mit vielen Beispielen aus der Praxis lesen sich leicht, das Layout und die vielen Teilüberschriften erleichtern die Übersicht. Am Ende des Buches befindet sich eine Liste mit Adressen von wichtigen Institutionen für deutsch-skandinavische Zusammenarbeit. Ein Sachregister hätte die Anwendbarkeit noch erhöht.

In einem Buch über interkulturelle Kompetenz achtet man natürlich auf Übersetzungsprobleme. Das schwedische „län“ hat in Deutschland keine Entsprechung und ist deshalb unübersetzbar. Wenn in ein und demselben Buch aber Zusammenfassungen mit Bezirks-, Regierungsbezirk, Provinz und Provinzial- dafür auftreten, z.B. Bezirksparlament und Provinziallandtag (S. 117ff.; S. 153ff.), dann fragt man sich, wie ein deutscher Leser damit zurechtkommt. Ein eher stilistisches Problem entsteht bei Interferenzen vom Typ „Das Skaraborg Wirtschaftsbüro“. Was man lieber sagen sollte? Ja, dafür braucht man interkulturelle Kompetenz.

Ingrid Neumann

Serge Verlinde, Jean Binon, Jan Van Dyck, **Dictionnaire contextuel du français économique**, tome A: **L'entreprise**, Leuven/Apeldoorn, Garant, 1993, 80 pp., 165 BEF, ISBN 90-5350-205-X.

Serge Verlinde, **Dictionnaire contextuel du français économique**, tome A: **L'entreprise-Exercisier**, Leuven/Apeldoorn, Garant, 1993, 70 pp., 175 BEF, ISBN 90-5350-245-9.

Serge Verlinde, Jacques Folon, Jean Binon, Jan Van Dyck, **Dictionnaire contextuel du français économique**, tome B: **Le commerce**, Leuven/Apeldoorn, Garant, 1993, 96 pp., 195 BEF, ISBN 90-5350-231-9.

Serge Verlinde, **Dictionnaire contextuel du français économique**, tome B: **Le commerce-Exercisier**, Leuven/Apeldoorn, Garant, 1994, 80 pp., 195 BEF, ISBN 90-5350-303-X.

Serge Verlinde, Jacques Folon, Jean Binon, Jan Van Dyck, **Dictionnaire contextuel du français économique**, tome C: **Les finances**, Leuven/Apeldoorn, Garant, 1995, 118 pp., 225 BEF, ISBN 90-5350-444-3.

Serge Verlinde, Jacques Folon, Jean Binon, Jan Van Dyck, **Dictionnaire contextuel du français économique**, tome D: **L'emploi**, Leuven/Apeldoorn, Garant, 1996, 93 pp., 210 BEF, ISBN 90-5350-515-6.

Le quatrième fascicule (D : *L'emploi*) d'un dictionnaire d'une conception originale, le *Dictionnaire contextuel du français économique*, vient d'être publié par une équipe belge constituée de Serge Verlinde et Jean Binon de l'Institut voor Levende Talen à l'Université catholique de Louvain, de Jacques Folon, Institut supérieur de commerce Saint-Louis (Bruxelles) et de Jan Van Dyck, Universitaire Faculteiten Sint-Ignatius (Anvers).

La nouveauté de ce dictionnaire se manifeste de plusieurs manières. D'abord, on a choisi de présenter les matériaux de l'ouvrage en quatre fascicules thématiques ainsi conçus : tome A : *L'entreprise* (la création, la gestion, le développement, la production, la compétitivité d'une entreprise, pour ne citer que quelques-uns des domaines abordés); tome B : *Le commerce* (les vendeurs, le marketing, la procédure d'achat, le point de vente, les acheteurs, le commerce international); tome C : *Les finances* (entre autres le budget familial : revenus – dépenses – impôts, le financement et la comptabilité d'une entreprise, les finances publiques, les banques, la Bourse); tome D : *L'emploi* (le marché du travail, les études, chercher et trouver un emploi, le chômage, la retraite, les conditions de travail, le temps de travail, les syndicats...).

Conscients du fait que, pour bien réussir dans sa carrière future, l'étudiant doit acquérir outre une solide compétence linguistique, de bonnes connaissances du monde de la vie professionnelle, les auteurs de cet ouvrage ont préféré donner non seulement des listes de mots appartenant au lexique économique mais aussi une introduction aux sciences économiques et aux sciences de gestion. Dans ce but, les pages impaires offrent des phrases, ou des fragments de phrases, qui permettent à l'étudiant de se familiariser avec le monde des affaires. Si ces phrases ne sont pas toujours absolument authentiques, elles sont toutes établies à partir de phrases relevées dans le corpus, qui sert de base au dictionnaire. Ce corpus renferme, entre autres, les bulletins de la Kredietbank et des articles économiques des journaux *La Libre Belgique* et *Le Soir* – au total, une masse de textes de près de 6 millions de mots. C'est précisément le fait de rassembler les matériaux linguistiques par « champs sémantiques », un classement onomasiologique si l'on veut, tout en tirant profit des données fournies par le corpus (« les collocations au sens large » d'après l'avant-propos), qui permet à cet ouvrage de s'intituler « dictionnaire contextuel ».

Chaque page impaire a son pendant pair qui donne des précisions sur le vocabulaire introduit à la page impaire, tantôt en proposant des tableaux de dérivation ou des inventaires de mots apparentés, tantôt en mettant en contraste des mots « difficiles » pour prévenir les confusions. Ainsi, le lecteur apprend, par exemple, qu'il convient de faire la différence entre une 'filiale', (« une société dont une partie du capital est détenue par la société mère, qui de ce fait peut y exercer un pouvoir », t. A, p. 26), et une 'succursale' (« qui est détenue à 100% par une société », *ibid.*). Sait-on ce que c'est qu'un 'raider', ou bien un 'chevalier noir', un 'assaillant', un 'prédateur' dans le domaine de l'économie? – C'est un « financier, un industriel ou un groupe industriel ou financier qui tente de s'introduire dans une entreprise, généralement en achetant subrepticement les actions afin de disposer ensuite, au sein de l'assemblée générale des actionnaires, d'une minorité de blocage ou même d'une majorité » (t. A, p. 34). En d'autres termes, un 'raider' ou un 'chevalier noir' lance une 'OPA' (« offre publique d'achat », t. A, p. 35) hostile, ou sauvage, sur une entreprise. Heureusement, on peut parfois compter sur l'assistance d'un 'chevalier blanc', un « groupe ami d'une société qui l'aide à résister au raider » (t. A, p. 34). Quelques autres domaines où il convient de choisir ses mots avec précaution : 'concurrentiel' (« qui se montre au moins égal à la concurrence dans une entreprise », t. A, p. 64) vs. 'compétitif' (« capable de battre la concurrence sur un marché », *ibid.*), 'créneau' (« segment du marché non encore exploité et donc particulièrement attrayant », t. A, p. 60) vs. 'niche' (« segment du marché très spécialisé où il n'y a pas ou très peu de concurrence », *ibid.*), 'conditionnement' (« l'emballage dans sa fonction informative et publicitaire, ex. : Avec sa petite bouteille verte, Perrier a créé un superbe conditionnement », t. B, p. 10) vs. 'emballage' (« qui regroupe dans un seul objet (une grosse boîte par exemple) plusieurs objets conditionnés en vue de leur transport », *ibid.*), 'acompte' (« les deux parties s'engagent à exécuter le contrat. S'il y a toutefois rupture de contrat, l'acompte est restitué », t. B, p. 32) vs. 'arrhes' (« les deux parties peuvent renoncer à l'exécution du contrat : l'acheteur en perdant les arrhes et le vendeur en restituant les arrhes et en payant une indemnité supplémentaire », *ibid.*) 'créancier' (« un créancier peut devenir un créancier ou un prêteur s'il met une partie de son capital à la disposition de quelqu'un (sous la forme d'un emprunt p. ex.), *ibid.*). Les différentes formes de réductions de prix peuvent, certes, éveiller un certain intérêt : 'remise' (« réduction accordée en tenant compte de l'importance de la vente ou de la profession du client », t. B, p. 34), 'rabais' (« réduction accordée afin de tenir compte d'un défaut de qualité ou de conformité des produits vendus », *ibid.*), 'escompte' (« réduction accordée sur le montant d'une facture pour paiement comptant », *ibid.*), 'ristourne' (« remboursement à un client d'une partie des sommes qu'il a déjà payées selon un pourcentage défini à l'avance et pour encourager le client à rester fidèle », *ibid.*).

Parmi les nombreuses qualités de ce dictionnaire, il faut souligner son système de marques d'usage, système qui permet de distinguer l'usage belge (B) de l'usage français (F). Examinons, pour illustrer ce point, ces quelques exemples où la première alternative donnée représente l'usage belge selon la formule (B)/(F) : 'un parastatal' (« département ministériel dont la gestion est individualisée »)/'un établissement public' (t. A, p. 8). « Ce pensionné/retraité touche une pension (de retraite)/une retraite » (t. C, p. 17). « Le paiement s'effectue à l'aide d'une carte de débit/carte bleue » (t. C, p. 19). « Pour payer l'achat d'une maison, sa banque lui accorde un prêt hypothécaire/un prêt immobilier » (t. C, p. 23). « Pour acheter une voiture neuve sa banque lui accorde un prêt à tempérament/un crédit à la consommation » (*ibid.*). « A partir de l'ensemble des revenus, le fisc détermine la base imposable/l'assiette fiscale » (t. C, p. 27). « Le contrôleur/percepteur conteste la déclaration d'impôt » (*ibid.*) « Les comptes annuels sont vérifiés par un réviseur d'entreprises/un commissaire aux comptes » (t. C, p. 43).

Chacun des quatre tomes contient aussi un index alphabétique qui reprend, exhaustivement, les mots et les combinaisons de mots mentionnés. En outre, un système d'astérisques permet d'indiquer le taux de fréquence, dans le corpus, de la fa-

mille de mots à laquelle appartient le mot en question. Ainsi, il est très significatif de l'époque que nous vivons de voir l'adjectif 'vacant' (un poste vacant) et la série 'embauchage, embauche, embaucher, embaucheur' marqués d'un seul astérisque – signifiant ≤ 9 occurrences dans le corpus – tandis que la série 'chômage, chômer, chômeur' est classée 4 astérisques, c'est-à-dire ≥ 200 occurrences?

Les exercices qui accompagnent les tomes A et B proposent chacun 34 exercices de types variés : ouverts et fermés, écrits et oraux. Bien que ces exercices soient conçus spécifiquement pour les néerlandophones, la plupart des exercices sont monolingues (français) et pourraient donc être très utiles aussi pour les apprenants dont la langue maternelle n'est pas le néerlandais. En fait, ce ne sont que les exercices 1-4, 15 et 16, dans les deux exercices, qui présupposent une connaissance de cette langue. Dans le but de faciliter l'apprentissage auto-dirigé, on a enfin choisi d'incorporer des corrigés et des commentaires des exercices.

En résumé, cet ouvrage semble parfaitement capable de satisfaire aux exigences de tout un chacun se proposant de pénétrer les secrets du français économique. A nos yeux, il est particulièrement précieux premièrement parce qu'en plus de ce qu'on est en droit d'attendre d'un dictionnaire traditionnel il donne aussi une introduction à l'économie, deuxièmement parce qu'il présente la terminologie économique dans un contexte significatif – et vivant. Et c'est cette formule qui rend si agréable non seulement la consultation mais aussi la lecture de ce dictionnaire.

Karl-Anders Arvidsson

Gonzalo Navajas, Más allá de la posmodernidad. Estética de la nueva novela y cine españoles, Barcelona, EUB, 1996, 191 pág. ISBN: 84-89607-67-2

El profesor Navajas trabaja desde hace un par de décadas en los Estados Unidos donde ocupa una cátedra de literatura, cine y teoría literaria en la Universidad de California, Irvine. En este ensayo se fundamenta en una serie de textos narrativos y fílmicos españoles de la década de los ochenta para lanzar la hipótesis de que los principios de la postmodernidad están superados en la nueva estética española, de ahí el título del libro.

El ensayo está conformado alrededor de dos ejes. Por un lado, circunda alrededor de una serie de ejes temáticos que conforman una estética más allá de la posmodernidad, por otro, aplica esta idea a un conjunto de textos-tipo de un grupo restringido de escritores (F. de Azúa, C. J. Cela, A. García Morales, L. y J. Goytisolo, J. Marsé, E. Mendoza, J. J. Millás, A. Muñoz Molina, S. Puértolas, M. Roig, E. Tusquets, M. Vázquez Montalbán) y de cineastas (fundamentalmente Almodóvar, si bien por ejemplo Trueba es también mencionado) y sus obras de los años ochenta. El autor es conscientemente restringido en la selección de obras, puesto que no quiere hacer una investigación exhaustiva y catalogizante sobre lo publicado en este período, sino comprobar que hay un cambio epistemológico y que estos autores pueden servir de ejemplos para comprobar este fenómeno. Toda selección es, sin embargo, problemática y sin profundizar demasiado resulta evidente que hay una gran proliferación de escritores catalanes o afincados en Cataluña (ocho autores de trece son más del sesenta por ciento del corpus), por un lado, y que si bien hay una aceptable representación de novelistas mujeres (cuatro de trece, o el treinta por ciento, es probablemente bastante representativo del panorama de escritores en la España actual) no lo es así dentro del campo fílmico donde podría incluirse alguna película de, por ejemplo, Pilar Miró en el análisis. Frente a la proliferación de escritores catalanes, sobresale la falta de autores leoneses que constituyen una auténtica escuela en la narrativa española actual (L. Mateo Díez, J. Llamazares, J. M. Merino, entre otros) así como la extraña falta de uno de los autores catalanes más innovadores dentro del contexto epistemológico estudiado (E. Vila-Matas), y sorprende por los mismos motivos la ausencia del escritor vasco B. Atxaga.

Las obras de estos autores son, pues, sometidos a análisis desde las perspectivas epistemológicas de la postmodernidad que, según el estudioso, pueden resumirse en los siguientes rasgos:

- falta de una exploración axiológica o ausencia de principios y valores definidos.
- obras fragmentarias que constituyen un arte informe, indeterminado, carente de signos designativos precisables.

Frente a esta estética de la negatividad, de la ironía y la parodia, se produce una reacción que, si bien no rechaza la visión del mundo posmoderna, tampoco se resigna a la indiferencia cognitiva y ética de esta tendencia, sino que trata de buscar alternativas a la situación de irresolución del movimiento anterior. A esta nueva estética la denomina "neomodernismo", cuyas características primordiales podrían resumirse de la siguiente manera:

- frente a la perspectiva sincrónica desde el presente en la postmodernidad, que se desvinculaba del pasado o lo contemplaba con distancia irónica, destaca la recuperación de una perspectiva y de un espacio histórico.
- frente al carácter metanarrativo y la "desconstrucción" paródica, hay una vuelta hacia la anécdota y la narratividad como modo efectivo de recuperación del pasado y de adquisición de conocimientos; puede observarse la existencia de un lenguaje denotativo y no meramente connotativo e irónico que retoma la posibilidad de una investigación ética.
- frente a la desconstrucción de la identidad sólida del yo clásico realizada en la etapa posmoderna, se recomponen la posibilidad de identidades personales. En este sentido resalta la conformación de la identidad femenina especialmente en las novelas de mujeres mencionadas arriba (Tusquets, Moix, Puértolas, García Morales), pero también en los relatos de Millás y en la cinematografía de Almodóvar. Una nueva erótica desde la perspectiva femenina es aquí especialmente destacable (aquí se echa en falta la ausencia de Almudena Grandes entre los autores seleccionados).
- frente al escepticismo sobre las posibilidades del arte, hay una renovada aspiración a incluir en la literatura otras artes pero que no tienen relación con el mundo clásico sino con formas populares (como la música del jazz proveniente de grupos marginados en EE.UU. o el cine que atrae a las grandes masas de público como es el caso del cine negro o de acción).

La novela histórica, autobiográfica, erótica, así como la recuperación de la narratividad y de la anécdota son rasgos que se pueden encontrar en la literatura occidental en general. Cobra, en cambio, mayor relevancia la reflexión que lleva a cabo Navajas sobre la integración de la narrativa española de las últimas generaciones en un contexto internacional (occidental). En su análisis toma autores de generaciones anteriores (Cela, Marsé, los hermanos Goytisolo, pero también A. M. Moix y Tusquets) que si bien guardan rasgos concomitantes con las nuevas generaciones, mantienen en su discurso residuos de una España aislada del contexto europeo; las nuevas generaciones de escritores y escritoras así como los (las?) cineastas se distancian de la tradición separatista, aislacionista, fatalista, negativista que ha caracterizado gran parte de la literatura y del arte español desde el barroco (desde Quevedo, pasando por los modernistas Baroja o Valle-Inclán con los cuales guarda tan estrecha relación Cela y *contra* cuya tradición Goytisolo, Marsé, Moix y Tusquets desarrollan sus respectivos discursos). Frente a esta tradición, el pensamiento y la literatura españoles de la última década hacen de la exploración de la emancipación individual un tema primordial.

Visto desde esta perspectiva, el análisis de Navajas adquiere una profundidad histórica importante y significaría (en caso de que demos por válidas las conclusio-

nes de su análisis) que la transformación de la España de las últimas décadas se enlazaría con la de la época anterior a la guerra civil en la que el mundo intelectual español (tras la generación del -98 con la incursión del modernismo y la denominada generación del -27) constituía una auténtica vanguardia en el contexto internacional. Esto implica que la cultura española se habría liberado finalmente del tremendo trauma de la guerra cainista, y a los sesenta años de la irrupción de la trágica contienda civil nos encontraríamos con un renacimiento de la cultura española integrada de forma natural en su contexto occidental.

No cabe duda de que hace falta tener una perspectiva histórica más amplia para apreciar los alcances del análisis del profesor Navajas. Sin embargo, el mero hecho de que haya podido observar en su estudio una transformación en la sensibilidad artística española (y estas son reflexiones más, no de Navajas) que iría del sentimiento trágico de la vida tan hispánico (en una línea discontinua desde Quevedo pasando por Unamuno y Valle-Inclán, hasta Cela y Goytisolo) a un sentimiento más bien tragicómico con grandes dosis de distancia irónica e incluso de humor (en la tradición de, sobre todo, Cervantes pero también de Lope, y anteriormente en *La Celestina* y la picaresca, tradición que sería retomada por Martín Santos y Benet hasta llegar a los discursos actuales de p. ej. García Morales, Muñoz Molina o Almodóvar), significa una aportación importantísima al debate sobre la cultura española actual tanto en su contexto occidental como en el de su propia tradición.

Ken Benson

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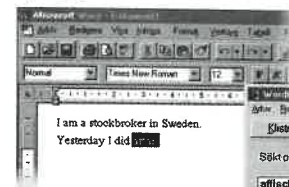
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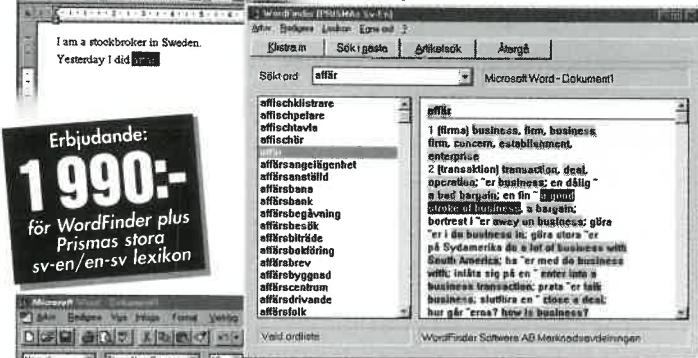
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