

that is, with more recourse to “reality” and extratextual matters than many contemporary thinkers are willing to concede.

Metahistory offers us an extensive and thoroughgoing exploration of the historical imagination in 19th-century Europe, that is, an analysis of the historical method as put forward by different historians, philosophers and social theorists from Hegel to Croce. What makes White’s book differ brilliantly from others of the same kind is the fact that he works through the different ideas of history and, at the same time, successfully studies the ideological validations they enjoyed in their time. This turns *Metahistory* into a study not only of historical consciousness but also an exploration of history as a mode of cognition and emplotment. White’s work begins by establishing “realism” as the guiding principle for the different modes of historical writing in the 19th century—exemplified by Michelet, Ranke, Tocqueville and Burckhardt. The late part of the century is characterized—as set forth in the writings of Marx, Nietzsche and Croce—by the repudiation of realism in historical consciousness. In White’s formulation, it is metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony—“the basic types of linguistic prefiguration”—that articulate the four theories of truth-making in historical understanding found in the late 19th century (Formism, Mechanism, Organicism, and Contextualism). Hence White’s distinction of four “strategies of ideological implication by which historians can suggest to their readers the import of their studies of the past for the comprehension of the present”: Anarchism, Radicalism, Conservatism, and Liberalism (427).

On the other hand, gathering essays written throughout the first half of the 1980s, *The Content of the Form* maintains this same perspective of historical imagination as narrative, enlarging its scope to embrace contemporary forms of historical understanding—Jameson, Foucault and Ricoeur, among others; but in this case, the study of narrativity is not only confined to historical discourse. It is here that White’s inquiry reaches its profoundest implications for cultural history. Here his analyses, while still showing how narrative organization is the way by which historical events are given shape, draw on the more general principle that narrative is not only a foundational element of historiography, but of cultural reality and human life in general. In so doing, White attempts to reach (and actually attains, I think) an anthropological, transcultural element in the configuration not only of history but also of culture itself.

Ricardo Miguel Alfonso

Víctor Manuel Pina Medina. *La idiomaticidad en el lenguaje literario: estudio basado en la novela On the Road de Jack Kerouac en sus versiones inglesa, castellana y francesa.* Alicante: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 1993.

As the author reminds us at the very beginning, “linguistics and literature have ignored each other for many years.” Traditionally, the two main domains of what is loosely called in Spanish “philology” (*filología*) have not worked together as they should, thus forcing any would-be scholar to a painful, unavoidable choice, placing us at a meaningless

crossroads that, either supposedly prevents the person from enjoying the pleasure of literature (should we choose to “do linguistics”), or apparently denied us the chance to understand the way language works as a system, if our choice led us towards literature.

In this situation, which fortunately we are starting to overcome thanks to great “revolutions” such as those produced after the Russian formalists or Jakobson’s poetics, professor Pina’s study helps to envisage a happy coexistence of both linguistic theory and aesthetic pleasure. The present analysis, based on the novel *On the Road*, focuses on one of the features that make Kerouac’s style stand out compared with the then existing literary canon: together with J. D. Salinger’s juvenile heroes in *The Catcher in the Rye*, *On the Road* gives us the chance to listen to the protagonists speaking in their own words, the words of the beat generation, while showing a narrator whose linguistic creativity knows no bounds.

Added to its literary interest, *La idiomática* is based upon three main concerns, which cover almost the whole of what is commonly known as “applied linguistics”: translation, semantics and foreign language learning. Regarding the latter, we have found numerous references to the question of idioms as an idiosyncratic feature, peculiar to each language and resulting from the personal history and conditions of different countries (let us not forget the hilarious contrast between *take French leave* and *filer à l’anglaise*, a real souvenir of the past history of two countries between which there was not much love lost). This leads professor Pina to discuss, not only the possible origins of idioms, but the context in which they are used, which represent a real odyssey for learners of English, who are faced with the double difficulty of hitting upon the correct structure (which hardly ever coincides with the one used in Spanish) *and* deciding when and before whom they can use their brand “new” words, in such a way that our students often find themselves in absurd or even embarrassing situations, if the choice of context is not the correct one (to overcome this obstacle, a situational view of language is suggested, based on Hymes’s *Foundations in Sociolinguistics*). However, the author of this book quite rightly points out that the register in which idioms are used does not necessarily have to be familiar, as is often believed, and gives examples illustrating cases of idioms in the most formal situations (such as, for instance, the Bible itself, which is the source of a number of these structures).

Such interest in language teaching justifies, in our opinion, the author’s choice of dictionaries, which favours definitions from “learning” dictionaries, for they are the ones most concerned with offering a clear, non-native-speaker-based definition of separate idioms and the idiom itself; although more “theoretical” studies would rather refer us to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, professor Pina does not ignore that learners (and, for that matter, many translators and almost all non-native speakers of English) use such dictionaries as their only way of access to the language.

From the lexicological point of view, the present work offers a detailed preliminary description of the structure of idioms, especially as regards their specific nature. In this respect, we have found a particularly interesting account of idioms as a separate entity, not to be confused with proverbs or phrasal verbs. Such a confusion springs, in our opinion, from the very process of language teaching, and most probably we teachers are partly to blame, for we have tended to group all those structures under the general heading

of “difficult vocabulary which cannot be literally translated.” Moreover, the author’s distinction between the origins of idioms and their context of usage allows us to understand more clearly the phenomena of context change and eventual displacements in meaning.

Thirdly, we must remember the main aim of the book, and the one to which the second part is devoted, i.e. the translation of idioms. The author has chosen to analyse versions of *On the Road* both in Spanish (*En el camino*) and in French (*Sur la route*), and examples are given in all three languages, though, for the sake of clarity and comparison, occasional examples are quoted from German and Russian. By using also the French version, which indeed is worthy of praise in that it encourages the collaboration between English and French Studies, translators’ strategies can be more easily seen, and different choices stand out clearly, above all concerning the dilemma between literal versions (maintaining the original structure) and more “creative” renderings.

An added asset to this book is that it is “user-friendly” in the most literal sense of the word, going from general to particular issues, and featuring a large number of examples and explanations, which make it accessible even for non-linguists. At the same time, it possesses a firmly grounded linguistic basis, with frequent references to literature on translation (especially to García Yebra and Eugene Nida) and to the general structuralist paradigm and mainstream semantic theory.

However, and following our previous comments on aesthetic enjoyment, we cannot conceive this book as a mere linguistic analysis, and therefore it can in no way be considered that *On the Road* is an “excuse” which illustrates a series of theories on idioms; quite on the contrary, *La idiomaticidad* constitutes a real, decided approach to Kerouac’s novel, an instrument which enables us to apprehend and enjoy it better. Such should be the pursuit of linguistics, if we want to put an end to the unjust divorce between linguistics and literature and thus put all the progress we have made over the last decades at the reader’s disposal.

Miguel Ángel Campos Pardillos

Ch. F. Meyer. *Apposition in Contemporary English*. Studies in English Language. Cambridge. Cambridge UP, 1992, XIV + 152 pp.

The concept of *apposition* has been, to the best of my knowledge, one of the most poorly treated by the scholars of the linguistic science, perhaps due to the fact that it is a technical term whose scope lies beyond the consciousness that, for instance, native speakers have about other linguistic entities such as transparent categories like nouns or verbs, or about primary functions like subject or predicate. Since it had not been properly analysed in traditional Greek- or Latin-based grammars, the apposition has always been a kind of rag-bag into which linguists filed those pieces of discourse which could hardly be placed under other orthodox labels. Even in studies centred upon this notion, syntactic, semantic and informational considerations mingle and blur together, and as a consequence