Notes

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Derek Pearsall. *The Canterbury Tales*. London: Routledge, 1993, 380 pp. £ 12.99 pb.

An excellent monograph on Chaucer's masterpice, Derek Pearsall's book can be recommended both to undergraduate students and specialists in English medieval literature. Its general plan is that of a very illuminating introduction to *The Canterbury Tales*, but it also furnishes more detailed analyses and descriptions for the benefit of the scholar who is already familiar with the basic facts. In addition to an introductory chapter—in which Pearsall lays emphasis on the essential diversity of the *Tales* in contrast to the inveterate habit of approaching them as if they formed a single unitary poem—there are sections on the date and extant manuscripts of this work, on the order and general plan of its narrative, on the literary character of the pilgrims, on the romantic, comic or religious nature of its tales, and finally on questions of audience and reception. The appendices of this book are of particular interest. Appendix A lists the manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales* in alphabetical order and classifies them by location (England, Scotland, and Wales, France, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, and the United States), whereas appendix B enumerates the principal editions of *The Canterbury Tales*, from Caxton's 1478 printing of the *Tales* to the 1983 *Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*.

Robert Welch. *Changing States: Transformations in Modern Irish Writing*. London: Routledge, 1993, 307 pp. £ 35 hb. £ 12.99 pb.

Robert Welch's book is an ambitious inquiry into the common contextual and historical grounds shared by the work of major authors of modern Irish literature, such as George

Moore, W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, James Joyce, Joyce Cary, Francis Stuart, Samuel Beckett, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Seán Ó Ríordáin, Brian Friel, and Seamus Heaney. In this respect, Welch's position on the authenticity and strength of any particular culture is simple enough: it will enjoy these qualities inasmuch as "it remains attentive to the interaction between change and stasis" (7). It is precisely against this background of cultural modification and/or permanence that Welch places these writers, in order to investigate their individual responses to the evolution of the Irish culture from old Gaelic times to 20th-century attitudes. In the fourteen essays comprised in this book, Welch explores the main themes—awareness of the role of language, dissolution of the self, and preoccupation with the past—arising from the reaction of modern Irish authors towards the duality between transformation and continuity. *Changing States* is, therefore, an indispensable work for students and scholars working within the general field of modern Irish studies.

David Trotter. *The English Novel in History 1895-1920.* **London: Routledge, 1993, 337 pp. £ 35 hb. £ 10.99 pb.**

The English Novel in History 1895-1920 is a book mainly addressed to students. In examining the evolution of the English novel from the Victorian period to Modernism, its fundamental claim is that one should not dwell exclusively on the innovatory experiments carried out by James, Conrad, Joyce, Woolf, or Lawrence, but also on a large mass of "lowbrow" fiction such as detective stories and spy-thrillers, which also reflected contemporary attitudes, fears, concerns, and social transformations. Furthermore, this book contributes to dispel the notion that the advent of Modernist fiction was a smooth gradual development out of the 19th-century realistic novel. Since its intended readership is the undergraduate student, *The English Novel in History 1895-1920* exhibits a clear style, in agreement with the efforts made by its author to present a full picture of the complexities of early 20th-century English fiction, eschewing, at the same time, all unnecessary complication. On this account, this book will be an excellent tool for those students taking seminars in English Modernist fiction with a marked emphasis on the contextual links between the narrative work and its social and cultural setting.

Ezra Pound. *Antología poética.* **Ed. and intr. Manuel Almagro, trans. Antonio Rivero. Sevilla: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1991, 323 pp.**

Si Ezra Pound es un autor difícil para los propios especialistas en la materia, por supuesto no lo es menos para el público en general, de ahí que nos parezca más que encomiable la idea de editar esta recopilación y traducción de la poesía de Pound desde sus comienzos hasta *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,* con la que el lector puede darse cuenta de la evolución del artista como poeta. Además, se incluyen notas a los poemas traducidos ("más explicativas que interpretativas," para no distraer la atención del lector), una breve pero adecuada bibliografía y una larga, exhaustiva y espléndida introducción que ofrece datos

biográficos y literarios de Pound para dar al lector una idea general sobre los conceptos clave de su poética. En resumen, una antología que no debería faltar en nuestra biblioteca.

James Joyce. *Dublineses*. Ed. and intr. Fernando Galván, trans. Eduardo Chamorro. Madrid: Cátedra, 1993, 349 pp.

No sería de extrañar —y, desde luego, es más que deseable— que esta reciente edición de *Dublineses* a cargo de Fernando Galván se erigiese en un hito de las traducciones al español de obras de valor universal. Y es que tenemos hoy entre manos un ejemplo a seguir de lo que deben ser las traducciones y ediciones críticas de textos literarios. El texto original ha sido traducido con una precisión y un cuidado admirables, expresamente para esta edición; el aparato crítico periférico en forma de notas al pie nos ofrece el punto de referencia insustituible sobre el universo alusivo de la obra de Joyce; finalmente, la extensa introducción nos orienta en lo que se refiere a la vida de su autor, aporta la historia de la difícil publicación de *Dublineses*, y organiza algunas de las diferentes aproximaciones críticas elaboradas desde los años cuarenta: simbolistas, naturalistas, estructurales, histórico-culturales y postestructuralistas. Esta última parte no sólo viene apoyada por los extensos conocimientos del editor, sino además por una sección bibliográfica en la cual se agrupan —en la medida que permite la ingente cantidad de escritos existentes— los trabajos de mayor interés para cualquiera que esté interesado en la obra de Joyce. Lo que este conjunto nos ofrece, pues, es la clase de edición que tanto un lector común como un especialista pueden desear: una traducción pulcra y asequible, a la vez que competente y trabajada, por una parte, y una completísima serie de referencias que nos guían en el ámbito (tanto geográfico como sociocultural) de la obra, por otra.

En resumidas cuentas, podemos contar, junto con esta nueva edición de *Dublineses*, la reedición de la edición crítica de los *Himnos a la noche* de Novalis a cargo de Eustaquio Barjau (antes en Editora Nacional) o la versión bilingüe de "Anna Livia Plurabelle" a cargo de Francisco García Tortosa como algunos de los espléndidos ejemplos de traducción y edición crítica con los que Cátedra nos ha venido obsequiando últimamente.

George W. Smith. *Computers and Human Language*. New York: Oxford UP, 1991, 478 pp.

Many books have been written on Computational Linguistics but only a few approach the subject from a true introductory perspective. This is exactly what we find in *Computers and Human Language*, a text that somebody described as "a guided tour through the forest of Computational Linguistics."

Smith's text provides a basic, nontechnical introduction to the main issues and problems within the field, focusing on the ways in which the use of computers and the application of

computational methods have influenced the study of language over the past forty years. The book covers all aspects of language analysis and generation starting in the first chapters with the problems of orthography and word formation rules and dealing with the complex aspects of knowledge representation in the last chapter. What we find in between is a detailed and nontrivial treatment of topics such as lexical organization, syntactic and semantic processing and their integration, discourse interpretation and world knowledge. There are as well special mentions to the latest approaches to linguistic computation covering the areas of statistical analysis and conecctionist systems.

Together with its breath of coverage, *Computers and Human Language* has another advantage: it suggests a set of exercises at the end of each chapter and offers a further reading section with those titles that cover the major topics. In conclusion, this book can be useful for those with no previous knowledge in Computational Linguistics who wish to get a general overview of the subject and introduce themselves to the world of computers and linguistics.

Marlene Carpenter. *The Link between Language and Consciousness*. Maryland: UP of America, 1991, 120 pp.

This book is a psychological-philosophical study about the relationship between the language we use and our way of thinking, but the main analysis is centred on swearing and the effects of this type of language on our daily life. In general, swearing is presented as a negative phenomenon which affects our social relations, our family and our professional activities. Swearing is also set up against "positive language." Positive thinking (and, as a consequence, positive language) includes, for example, saying nice things even if you don't feel them, smiling while talking, not complaining, etc. So, the hypothesis of this study is that positive thinking provides positive language and, what is even more important, positive language entails and gives the final result of positive thinking.

As far as terminology is concerned, M. Carpenter makes use of the usual labels when referring to "bad language": profanity, swearing, abusive language, blasphemy, and many more. In relation to her classification of this kind of language, she first talks about common swear-words, but she adds additional types of cursing such as complaining, criticizing, gossiping, and even clothing, which appears to be too general a classification.

Furthermore, it is the first time that verbal aggression is studied in relation with the New Era Philosophy. New Era ideas comprise different fields (medicine, psychology and language, among others), but the problem with this philosophy is to place it in the traditional classification of scientific knowledge. She also mentions the roots of swearing/cursing, which are both conformity and rebellion. As for the effects, anxiety, anger and depression are taken into account.

In conclusion, although the author makes clear from the beginning that her book is not going to follow a linguistic approach, in international bibliographies you can find the book is indexed with the keywords Philosophy of Language and Psycholinguistics, which of course may fall into the more general categories of Linguistics and Language. In spite of her negative view of cursing, she devotes a whole chapter ("Is Cursing Ever Proper?") to explain that you can justify the use of swear-words on some occasions, and this is the first

time that the situational variable is brought to the fore in this book. In the end, she reminds us of the medical advice "don't internalize frustration" when she declares that (72) "Occasional cursing acts as a release of negative feelings which, if blocked from verbal expression, can cause harm. . . ." So, in general, some of the advice given in the book is really helpful, and you can recommend it to undergraduates because it is short and offers examples from daily life.