

EUROPEAN ENGLISH STUDIES: CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE HISTORY OF A DISCIPLINE' ENGLER, BALZ and RENATE HASS, eds. *European English Studies: Contributions towards the History of a Discipline*. Great Britain: The English Association for ESSE, 2000.

In the thirty seven years that separate us from the publication of D. J. Palmer's pathbreaking book, *The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of English Language and Literature from its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School*, the number of academic books and essays devoted to the analysis of the rise of English Studies has been too numerous to be listed. However, the publication of *European English Studies: Contributions towards the History of a Discipline* still fills an important void, since it represents a sustained attempt to undermine the traditional view, represented by studies such as Palmer's, that the history of English Studies as a university discipline is a British phenomenon, instead of, as Balz Engler contends in the introduction to *European English Studies*, "a European one" (2; emphasis in the original).

As the editors point out in the preface, the idea for the book originated in a panel held at the third Conference of the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE), that took place in Glasgow in 1995. The book is a collection of essays by various authors, distributed in three sections. The first one, "National Surveys," follows a geographical logic. It includes five sub-sections, each containing five essays devoted to the rise of English Studies in one European country. The fact that, in all, only fifteen European countries are represented is justified by the inclusion of the word "Contributions" in the subtitle. Still, the reader must lament the absence of essays devoted to countries such as Greece, Hungary or Russia, where English Studies have an important history.

Although all the essays tend to concentrate on the incorporation of English Studies in the university curriculum, they are perhaps more varied in style, content and length than would be desirable. The period under discussion ranges from, at one end, an essay covering the subject from the Middle Ages to the present (Martin A. Kayman on Portugal), to, at the other end, an

essay covering only "from about 1870 until 1943" (103) (Arthur O. Sandved on Norway). The heterogeneity in scope and approach evinces a certain looseness of coordination, enhanced by the impression of hastiness in the proofreading process, for example, the omission of the place of publication (Leicester) and the unintentional inclusion of a footnote in French (85, no. 35).

Still, all the papers are interesting in themselves, clearly showing how decisive the historical, political and linguistic factors have been in the rise of English Studies in Europe. Thus, as Kayman shows, the beginning of the Portuguese tradition of studying English together with German at university level is closely linked to the political alliance between Portugal and Britain made on the eve of the First World War (15). In Spain, by contrast, as Tomás Monterrey explains, the influence of French culture on Spanish intellectual life delayed the rise of English Studies until the opening up of Franco's regime in the 1950s and 1960s and is related to the establishment of the British Council in Madrid and the signing of the Economic and Military Agreement with the United States in 1952 (34, 37). To these external influences might be added an internal one, the creation of the first "Escuela Oficial de Idiomas" in Madrid (first called "Escuela Central de Idiomas") in the nineteen sixties with the aim of training Spaniards in modern European languages for commercial and practical purposes, including the government plans to transform Spain into a paradise for foreign tourists.

In the case of eastern countries behind the Iron Courtain, the ideological and political components in the rise of English Studies are even more prominent. The establishment of university degrees in English were heavily financed by institutions like the UNESCO or the British Council. And, as Krystina Kujawska-Courtney points out, the continuation or not of these degrees was wholly determined by the twists and turns of international affairs and of political upheavals beyond the control of academia, whose members at times risked ostracism and imprisonment (161-81).

The second section, entitled "European Case Studies," follows a thematic logic. It contains three essays. The first one, written by



Renate Haas, is devoted to the evolution of German Anglistics since 1848; the second, by Helmut Schrey, explains the role in the rise of English Studies played by the Czech Anglicist Vilém Fried (1915-87); and the third, written by Hans-Jürgen Diller, summarises the birth and growth of ESSE. This essay is particularly relevant, since it offers a well-written and lively account of the creation of the most sustained effort ever made by European University teachers of English to move beyond their national boundaries in order to discuss English Studies within a pan-European frame.

The last section contains two essays written by the editors. In the first one, "Englishness and English Studies" Balz Engler compares the historical, political and linguistic factors contributing to the rise of English Studies in Germany, India and Scotland, concluding that, in the case of India, the basic determining factor was, in Gauri Viswanathan's words, "the imperial mission of educating and civilising colonial subjects in the literature and thought of England. [...] to correct the negative view of the English created by the behaviour of the colonial masters." (339-40). The last essay, Renate Haas' "European Survey: Parameters and Patterns, constitutes a fitting coda for the book, since it highlights and connects the most important points made in the previous essays in the volume.

In a spirited article published in *The European English Messenger*, in 1996, Keith Battarbee contended that the recent attempts to "deconstruct" the term "English Studies" and to substitute it for "British Studies" evinces "a constantly recurrent conceptual angst" caused by the conviction of "the problematic nature of 'British Studies [and] reflected in the terminological instability between the older 'British Life & Institutions' (BLI), 'civilisation' and 'Landeskunde,' or the contemporary battery of 'Cultural Studies,' 'British (Cultural) Studies,' etc." (60). Battarbee's explanation for this conceptual angst is that British Studies "suffers from having two distinct and not always compatible origins":

Outside the UK, British Studies has for the most part emerged in the context of modern-language departments, alongside other

anglophone Area Studies programs. [...] Within the domestic British context, however, the parenthood of British Studies is quite different. It has been closely associated with "Cultural Studies" [...]. The intellectual roots here go back not to a Continental-style English Philology, but through Leavis to Arnold: a highly moral contemplation of the English novel by means of the English novel. [...] The domestic model thus leans towards critical introspection; the overseas one, towards empirical description. (61)

In the Introduction to *European English Studies*, Balz Engler widens the crucial dichotomy between the rise of English (or British) Studies at home and abroad established by Batterbee when he contends that the British outlook on English Studies is also the rule in other English-speaking countries; there, he says,

"English" refers exclusively to the study of literature(s), not only English, but also American, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Australian, New Zealand, Black British, and (as the euphemism goes) emerging ones. This may increasingly be complemented by aspects of cultural studies. Elsewhere, literature and linguistics are both integral parts of "English" and, as this tends to be the case where English is a foreign language, applied linguistics and language learning will, to different degrees, belong to it as well. (2-3)

What the book teaches us, then, is that, if the traditional account of the rise of English Studies has to be corrected, it is here that we should apply the correction, for, besides the contribution to the rise of English Studies made by British universities, and besides the effect of the British and U.S. imperialist policy of cultural expansion and linguistic globalization, we should also take into account the willingly active role played by non-English speaking countries in the rise and spread of English Studies in the world in order to draw the total picture.

SUSANA ONEGA



WORKS CITED

BATTARBEE, Keith "British Studies Angst."
The European English Messenger 5.1 (1996):
60-62.

PALMER, D.J. *The Rise of English Studies: An
Account of the Study of English Language and Lit-
erature from Its Origins to the Making of the Ox-
ford English School*. Oxford, New York, Toronto:
Oxford UP, 1965.

