

CARTER, R. and MCCARTHY, M., *Exploring Spoken English*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 160 pags. + 1 cassette.

This book explores the elusive, complex area of spoken English as it is transcribed from an authentic corpus, the already well known CANCODE project (Cambridge-Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English) which consists of five million words originated mainly from spontaneous everyday speech of contemporary spoken English, taking place in various social environments. The authors, Ronald Carter and Michael McCarthy, well known, experts in discourse studies as their numerous publications bear witness.

The ideal users of this text book should be advanced undergraduate students, especially those whose field of interest is focused on English as a second language, English stylistics, and both theoretical and applied linguistics. It can be used as a handbook, as it covers a wide range of topics derived from the spoken mode. The design of the book, in fact, foresees a balanced distribution across a wide range of speech genres: narrative, identifying language in action, comment, service encounters, debate and argument, language learning context and lastly, negotiating outcomes. Two or three units are devoted to each of them.

The stress here is laid on the much needed descriptive tools for analyzing spoken data provided by the CANCODE corpus. It is then designed to meet the needs of those students who have been perhaps too overloaded with written texts and badly need therefore fresher material to look into with curiosity and interest.

There is an empirical exploration of the conversation dialogues and to meet this purpose the authors provide detailed information about cultural background and comments on linguistic issues relating them to wider points of theoretical relevance. The accompanying recorded tape aims at a naturalistic presentation of spoken data, as the authors state in the introduction. In rare cases did they arrange faithful re-recordings of the conversations by actors for the sake of didactic clarity. The material then shuns artificiality. Also relevant for a didactic approach is the glossary of important terms which bear the intentional features of the text, devoted to spoken interaction: intensifiers, pragmatic particles, deictic terms, discourse markers, ellipsis, hedges and other such entries have pride of place in this exploration.

The plan of each units is as follows: First, there is a general introduction where the most outstanding features of the genre are sketchily stated at the beginning and an activity relating to the topic is proposed. Obviously a few of these features are to be identified by the student while listening to the recording. Second, the written transcripts are given in conveniently numbered lines with specification of the speaker's turn. The transcripts read easily, and are conveniently lacking in punctuation, as it does not often fit the authentic spoken data. The average length of the excerpts are around 80 lines, which is a very good chunk to be fully comprehended and its sense of coherence grasped by students at one go. A line by line commentary follows, perhaps the most valuable part for foreign students. There hard-to-tackle spots in the data are made easy and a few grammatical and discursive snags are explained away. Also cultural references that are unlikely to be accessed by students are clarified briefly. Lastly further reading appearing at the Reference section is proposed, so that higher level students will be able to make extra exercises in order to widen their knowledge while strengthening some weak points they may have encountered.

As a whole it is a very valuable book that introduces the student into that apparently disorganized maze of natural English conversation. But that first impression soon fades away when she/he carefully reads the short commentaries. Some are somewhat rushy, some on the contrary are deeper in detail. No doubt a few of them could have been improved, especially those intended as a guide for a better knowledge of the genres. In fact, an improved version that would compete with other works of the kind in the market should perhaps consider longer notes of general introduction to each genre, while enhancing the actual conversation analysis (turn taking, moves, discourse markers, particles etc), thus making the book slightly more voluminous. That decision would surely tilt the balance towards the addressing of the work to university students of English discourse rather than to high level English as practical handbook both for first years University and late secondary education students. But perhaps both the authors' and the publisher's interest lie in the provision of material for the latter. [VICENTE LÓPEZ FOLGADO].

COLLINS, Adela Yarbro, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*, Leiden-Boston-Colonia: E. J. Brill, 2000, xii + 261 págs.

Se hace accesible, ahora en nuevo formato y encuadernación en rústica, este oportuno y acertado libro que aglutina una serie de siete capítulos de diversa extensión en torno a la materia que comúnmente se ha aceptado en denominar "apocalíptica". En los trabajos reunidos se estudian una serie de textos procedentes de círculos judíos y cristianos, que se enmarcan en un corte temporal que va del siglo II antes de C. al IV después de C. y se centran, fundamentalmente, en dos motivos temáticos: la cosmología y la escatología. El primero posibilita la descripción y el estudio de la estructura del universo con su correspondiente función religiosa, en tanto que el segundo sirve para interpretar la historia presente y futura en la que se enmarcan los textos en cuestión.

La obra contiene un listado de abreviaciones (págs. ix-xii), los siete artículos reeditados (págs. 1-238) y los tres índices con que cierra: de autores y textos antiguos (págs. 239-254), de autores modernos (255-259) y de materias (págs. 260-261).

El primer capítulo ("Meaning and Significance in Apocalyptic Texts", págs. 1-20) se ocupa de fijar en el eje de coordenadas la problemática hermenéutica que han suscitado los textos denominados, desde una óptica ideológica y más tarde tipológica, como "apocalípticos". Trata, pues, del sentido y del significado de dichos textos y de las posibilidades hermenéuticas que los mismos proyectan continuamente en un doble nivel cronológico: el momento actual en el que se ponen por escrito (o leen) y en el futuro que está por llegar y que ellos anuncian.