

Book Reviews

***Nostalgia and the Post-War Labour Party: Prisoners of the Past.* Richard Jobson.** Manchester University Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-5261-1330-6, 232 pp.

The focus of Richard Jobson's book is 'nostalgia' and the impact that this term has had on the trajectory of the Labour Party since 1951). It considers the role of nostalgia in two competing wings of the Labour Party since 1951. On the one side is the Traditionalist wing (originally lead by Aneurin Bevan) that was wedded to Labour's traditional, industrial working class identity and socialist ideology. Whilst, the Revisionist wing (originally lead by Hugh Gaitskell) argued for the party to modernise by moving away from this traditional image toward one that acknowledged the role of British capitalism in the post-war period.

Jobson takes us through the history of the connotations of the term 'nostalgia', which is commonly understood as an emotional weakness. This conception arose following an assessment by Swiss doctors in the late seventeenth century who understood the painful feeling of longing, felt by those wanting to return home, as a mental affliction (4). The term is stereotypically associated with people who cannot let go of the past and who fight the 'tide of modernity' (5). It is most commonly paired with a memory of historically better times, a memory that erases the bad memories in favour of the good. Jobson, via several academics, asserts that our identity is tightly woven with our memories. He states that

‘Memory and identity are symbiotically reliant and neither could exist or gather emotional coherence without the other’ (6). In other words, what we remember is initially linked with our identity because what we perceive in the world around us is tied to who we are. One example Jobson gives is of idealised memories of Thatcher’s Britain that may be entwined with the identity of some in the Conservative Party, but that that identity would be essential to a nostalgic remembrance of her time in office. This symbiotic relationship is identified as ‘nostalgia-identity’ (5-7).

At the root of an instrumentalised nostalgia is the ability of power elites to manipulate the concept to achieve political goals (10). Nostalgia, Jobson argues, can be used to ‘persuade, placate, or influence an audience’ by speaking to and shaping the nostalgia-identity already held by a group (10). It is through the shaping of existing nostalgic sentiment that political elites can form fertile ground within which policies can be implemented. Jobson refers to this process as ‘instrumental nostalgic manipulation’ (10). So, how does Jobson apply this to the Labour Party?

He begins by outlining the uses of nostalgia in the competing wings. According to Jobson, beginning in the 1950s the Revisionists accused the Traditionalists of harking back to an age that was completely disjointed with the socio-economic landscape of the 1950s-60s. The main motivation for this was that public ownership and nationalisation were no longer as urgent in the 1950s as it was in the 1920s or 30s because capitalism had changed in that time (30). In *The Future of Socialism*, Anthony Crosland (a leading Revisionist thinker) argued that capitalism had morphed into a different system and, to remain relevant, so too should the Labour Party. In this way, nostalgia for a time gone by – of flat caps and coal covered miners – was evaluated as a negative thing; as a type of thinking that was holding the Labour Party back from modernising.

The Traditionalists wing, however, argued that Labour’s working-class past had created the Party and was at the heart of the movement’s ethos. This working-class identity, Jobson argues, was largely a male, industrial one that, for the Revisionists and the author, does not resonant outside of the Party itself. But, the substantive nature of the Traditionalist wing seems to be that a rejection of public ownership, particularly in the post-war years, would be to abandon the pioneers and

heroes of the movement who had worked so hard in the face of adversity to get Labour into power under Keir Hardie. It is an identification with this strength and solidarity of the early years of the Party that has formed Labour's identity and, Jobson argues, it was this nostalgia-identity 'that ensured that preservation and restoration, not modernisation' remained at the heart of Labour's Traditionalist wing (67).

To emphasise these elements, the book draws on speeches given at conferences over the years, motions and resolutions passed at Constituency Labour Party meetings, pamphlets, various socialist journals and mainstream media articles that all reference in some way nostalgia and nostalgic tendencies. The reader is taken through the Revisionists response to the Clause IV debate around common ownership, starting with Gaitskell's 1959 conference speech. The political climate in the Party following the end of the Harold Wilson government from 1970 onwards is then explored and contrasted with the rise of the Traditionalist-backed Labour's Alternative Economic Strategy (AES), which 'envisaged a widespread extension of public ownership' (85). The author continues his historical journey through to the New Labour era (1992-2010), which is positioned as a project to revitalise the Party that originated from 'a genuinely held belief that British society had changed and Labour had not' (3). A view that very much reflects the Revisionists of the 1950s and, as noted above, in particular Anthony Crosland. The final chapter moves on to the 2010 election defeat, the rise of Jeremy Corbyn as leader and the swing back towards Traditionalism.

The book concludes that, whilst nostalgia has 'provided the emotional adhesive' holding the Party together since the 1950s, it has also served to restrict 'Labour's ability to communicate effectively with the modern demands of British voters' (185). However, whichever wing of the Party that members and voters identify with, Jobson argues, nostalgia has been essential to Labour's shared understanding of the past and solidified its distinctive identity. An identity, Jobson warns, that has isolated the Party from 'external cultural' forces in British politics. To examine this warning more closely, perhaps too much energy (both within this book and in the Party itself) has been focused on internal battles over what the Party means and to whom, leading to a stifling of

Labour's ability to be a radical driver in the external culture that is British politics. However, if the negative and positive qualities of 'nostalgia-identity' unpacked by Jobson applies to the whole of the Labour Party, then the findings in his book could serve as a way of uniting the competing views explored here.

Abigail Rhodes
University of Nottingham

***Multilingualism: A Very Short Introduction* by John C. Maher.** Oxford University Press, 2017. ISBN: 9780198724995, 148 pp.

The 525th volume of Oxford University Press's popular *A Very Short Introduction* series, John C. Maher's *Multilingualism* examines the opportunities and challenges that linguistic diversity creates in the modern world. Divided into nine succinct chapters, each exploring a key topic within the field of multilingual studies, this pocket-sized guide offers a concise and readable overview of topics including the causes of linguistic diversity, multilingualism's role in politics, language endangerment, and the intersection between language and identity.

Although inevitably limited in scale by the *Very Short* format, Maher's work is nonetheless ambitious in its scope, considering multilingualism in both micro and macro contexts. In Chapter Five, for example, Maher zooms in on individual multilingualism, using case studies of linguistically-diverse families ('Jack speaks German to his children and Adile addresses them in Turkish') to explore how bilingualism is acquired and to introduce readers to characteristic features of bilingual individuals' speech, such as code-switching (67). In contrast, in Chapter Six, Maher switches to a much broader, societal perspective, using examples as diverse as the 'linguistic fallout of the French revolution' and language policies in the Philippines to explore the role that multilingualism plays in national politics (81; 87). Efficiently segueing from the micro to the macro and from individual to national multilingualism, this text – although *Very Short* – succeeds in conveying to readers a clear sense of the breadth of the topic that it introduces.

Enhancing this *Very Short Introduction's* scope and latitude is the author's commitment to using examples and case-studies drawn from a wide-range of contexts which showcase the way that multilingualism is 'a fact of life across all continents' (2). In Chapter Two, for example, Maher discusses the spread of multilingualism in relation to a global roster of languages, including Macanese Patuà, Estonian, the Ryukyuan languages, and 'aboriginal languages families such as Athapaskan, Tsimshian, Haida ... and Kutenai' (23). In the same chapter, Maher discusses the impact of both high and popular culture upon the spread of linguistic diversity by drawing an intriguing comparison between the cultural power of Milan's La Scala opera house and K-Pop. Maher's examinations of migration, religion, the economy, and 'transnational communities of knowledge' as propagators of multilingualism remain, due to limitations of space, fairly cursory (30). Nonetheless, the variety and originality of the examples that Maher uses to illustrate these arguments means that even seasoned linguists may glean fresh insights into modern-day linguistic diversity from his work (30).

That being said, this book is – as its title suggests – primarily intended as an introductory text for general readers and students new to the topic. Maher's appeal to that audience is evident in his creative use of 'myth-busting' as a structural device. In Chapter Three, for example, Maher quotes and subsequently busts six popular 'myths' about multilingualism, including polemical statements such as: 'English is the global standard. Why bother with anything else?' (38). The result is a highly-readable, accessible chapter that uses common (mis)conceptions about multilingualism as a springboard to introduce more nuanced discussions of the cultural, social, and economic advantages of linguistic diversity.

Maher's appeal to new and general readers is also evident in his commitment to offering limpid, jargon-free definitions of key vocabulary. Consider, for example, Maher's explanation of 'code-switching' in Chapter Five:

Code-switching goes like this. You are reading a newspaper in language A when the article switches to language B. You switch on the TV and watch an interviewer and interviewee, or a panel discussion switching between

languages A and B. In both cases there is an alternation between two languages in the same conversation or text (70).

Like myth-busting, this anecdotal approach to defining key terminology cleverly taps into general readers' pre-existing knowledge of multilingualism – a strategy which makes potentially unfamiliar terms comprehensible. Maher's decision to encourage readers to think about their own experiences of code-switching rather than quoting and analysing other sociolinguists' explanations of the phenomenon does, however, mean that students searching for research leads will find little inspiration for further reading on this and other subjects until they reach the bibliography at the end of book. Once found, however, that bibliography is comprehensive and helpfully divided into focused subsections relating to each of the nine chapters.

Offering a whistle-stop tour of linguistic diversity from the fall of the tower of Babel to the Premier League, *Multilingualism: A Very Short Introduction* is a lively, digestible primer to a complex subject. Whilst this text surveys rather than expands the field of multilingual studies, it nonetheless demonstrates that, more than just an academic subject, linguistic diversity is a topic which is of increasing interest to the general as well as the specialised reader. Balancing academic authority with accessibility and focusing on how multilingualism intersects with current topical issues, from 'globalization' to 'migration and transnational identities', this *Very Short Introduction* caters perfectly to a growing generalist audience (131).

Francesca White
University of Leicester

***Virgil and His Translators.* Susanna Braund and Zara Martirosova Torlone, editors.** Oxford University Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-19-8810181-0, 544 pp.

Whilst there have been thousands of translations of Virgil, complete or selective, in dozens of languages since its creation, critical engagement with these translations has mostly fuelled discussions on Virgilian

reception. Susanna Braund and Zara Martirosova Torlone's volume seeks to prioritise the subject of Virgilian translation, providing a "landmark publication devoted to the complex role that translations of Virgil's poetry have played in world literature and culture from the early modern period to the present day" (3). The result is a complex, wide-ranging volume which discusses, broadly, the appropriation of Virgil to: shape an independent cultural identity (as in Brazil and Ireland); create a new literary canon (as in Esperanto); or reflect on similarities with contemporary society (as in Dryden's Restoration England).

The volume mostly focuses on European languages, but also branches into cultures with relatively recent Virgilian interaction (such as Turkish, Chinese and Norwegian). Virgil's three major works are all covered, though not equally (the *Aeneid* has the most significant presence, reflective of its majority share in Virgilian translation). Papers, by both translators and academics, range from overarching thematic discussions to case studies on a specific text, translator, or context; the two contrasting approaches are juxtaposed to show how they can complement each other. A wide range of perspectives is shown, both from contributors themselves and the translators or theorists they discuss. Furthermore, whilst Kallendorf's opening chapter suggests that no translation should be judged as purely a success or failure, Torlone uses the very word to describe translations of which she is very critical (in Chapter 22). Far from being read as contradictions, these deviating approaches and perspectives show the range of co-existing viewpoints which make this multifaceted area of study so fascinating.

Structuring such a volume was always going to be tremendously difficult, and I criticise it, regrettably, without offering a better solution. The papers are split into two: 'Part 1, Virgil Translation as Cultural and Ideological Capital', which examines translation's relationship to socio-political contexts; and Part 2, 'Poets as Translators of Virgil: Cultural Competition, Appropriation, and Identification', on poets who have turned to Virgil for inspiration or legitimization of national literary canons. This delineation seems fairly muddled, and there is significant cultural and theoretical overlap between the parts (some indicated in the introduction and by in-chapter footnotes). Even within the parts, certain papers feel oddly placed when more usefully linked to chapters other

than their neighbours. This is because the chapters are organised into a cross-cultural chronology, which leads towards global chronological conclusions rather than more meaningful linear cultural conclusions. The editors' helpful notes to indicate related chapters might have been fewer, I suggest, if they were organised geographically rather than chronologically.

Many chapters take a New Historicist approach (with many also using, implicitly or explicitly, Schleiermacher's paradigm of domestication and foreignization, furthered by Venuti), and the introduction declares that some others are under-explored, including the study of female translators. Indeed, there is a lot more work to do here, though effectively discussed are conflicts and dilemmas facing specific female writers and translators engaging with the classics (Cox, in Chapter 6). Balmer (Chapter 28) suggests comments made by Sarah Ruden (the first female translator of the complete *Aeneid*) are reminiscent of female translator reticence towards the alpha-male *Aeneid*. Balmer understands these feelings of anxiety and inadequacy, but also feels drawn to her texts because of it, seeing her task as one of transgression and disruption and suggesting that translators look to destabilize the *Aeneid's* traditional masculinity.

Poetic translation is a key theme of the volume, since most of the translations covered are in verse, and many of them are by poets. In Chapter 2, Armstrong discusses how influence does not flow in one direction, but is a two-way process that reflects back on the translator's original poetry (for example, Dante's influence on Virgil). The question about whether being a successful translator necessitates being a successful poet is raised by Scafoglio in Chapter 20. De Vasconcellos shows a different stance on poetic retranslation in Chapter 23, where the national epithet in the translation's title 'The Brazilian Virgil' results in contentious authority and uneasy creative collaboration between the inextricably linked source author and target translator.

Translation equivalence is discussed through many guises. In Chapter 16, Thomas suggests that perhaps it is impossible to achieve sound equivalence in translation, and that poetic aesthetics may instead demand domestication. Liu discusses equivalence more generally in Chapter 15, exploring whether it is possible to translate Virgil's

significance into Chinese, where every aspect is alien to its audience. Most prominent in this volume is equivalence of meaning, in particular the use of the *Aeneid* to promote or subvert nationalism. In Chapter 10, Papaioannou discusses translations of the *Aeneid* which were used to support Catherine the Great's projection of Russia as a major military power. Opening the volume, Kallendorf shows how two translations of the *Aeneid* were used in France to support opposing political ideals. Moving to England, we read about Virgil as a vehicle for *translatio imperii*, the heroic transplanting of power from one civilisation to another (Braden, in Chapter 5), and Dryden's appropriation of the *Aeneid* to resonate with his contemporary political situation (Scully, in Chapter 18).

Within a more modern setting, Braund explores American translators using Virgil's attitude to empire in response to the Vietnam War (in Chapter 7). Contextual military appropriation is also discussed more philosophically by Rupp in Chapter 3, to contrast Virgil's war discourse with stoic ideals and changing concepts of heroism in early Spanish translations. Political significance circles back to the linguistic in discussions of the validity that translation can offer a language, for example to lend cultural capital to the recently invented Esperanto (Greatrex, in Chapter 8), or to show that Slovenian is a fully-fledged language of elite literature (Marinčič, in Chapter 11). Finally, the impact of the decision translators face between different language dialects is raised by Skoie in Chapter 13 (Norwegian) and by Eigler in Chapter 26 (Italian).

Readers need not be daunted by the volume's wide-ranging nature, nor by the number of languages covered. An interlinear English translation attempts, and broadly succeeds, to make each discussed language accessible. This method effectively conveys the word order and syntax used, also showing addition or omission of words. Whilst it enhances the reader's experience, it is not a perfect solution. Firstly, it introduces another, at least slightly subjective, element of translation. Secondly, without knowing the traditional syntax of a language, readers cannot derive from the interlinear translation whether the words have been arranged conventionally or unusually. I criticise here whilst treading carefully; it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to equip each reader

with the same understanding of each language analysis. Although any steps that can facilitate this are surely an achievement, without native language knowledge a reader will never fully understand subtle semantic or syntactical variations.

It is worth noting, particularly if the reader intends to consult just one or two chapters, that whilst some function well as independent arguments, others are more general and instead offer a series of interesting observations. These still contribute usefully to the volume overall, and indeed to the field, but might be less effective in isolation. This is a good reason to read the whole volume, as is the fact that readers are likely to come across some previously unexplored angles.

The volume invites interaction within the (few) areas that it doesn't discuss. Indeed, whilst it is timely, polished, and balanced, the volume itself acknowledges that it is the start of a conversation. Some chapters themselves, perhaps particularly those which focus on new areas of Virgilian translation study, admit that they raise more questions than they answer. This volume contributes to general discussions on reception and translation studies, but, beyond that, carves out an independent area of study and offers the limelight to discussion of Virgilian translation.

Melanie Fitton-Hayward
University of Nottingham