the element *he* is interpreted as given in 185 and as new in 186. In the words of the author, *he* in 185 is given because "185 expresses where the referent of the pronoun found a snake", while *he* in 186 is new because "186 tells us what happened at this location". We could argue, however, that the sentences both tend to express what happened at a certain location, i.e. to express the idea that somewhere, someone found a snake. Although the referents of *he* in the two sentences are different (in 186 *he* refers to *Peter*, in 185 *he* refers to someone else), the pronoun *he* could be interpreted as given in both the sentences.

In the *Conclusion*, Westergaard admits that "The criterion for the assignment of values to NPs as given or new information is not as clear as could be desired," that "the theory may need to distinguish between more elaborate structures such as embedded themes and embedded rhemes," and that certain problems could be solved by "a refinement of the scalar system". These seem to be the right areas to investigate in order to achieve greater comprehensibility and wider applicability of the author's elaborate method.

Jana Chamonikolasová

Morton Benson, Evelyn Benson, Robert Ilson, **The BBI combinatory dictionary of English, A guide to word combinations,** John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam and Philadelphia 1986, XXXVI − 286 pp.

The first entry in *The BBI combinatory dictionary of English* under N is *nadir* with two collocations: 'to reach a ~' and 'at a~'. The reader may not know what *nadir* is, nor does he learn its pronunciation, but the BBI dictionary (The first English dictionary named after its authors?) tells him that the preposition used before *nadir* is *at*. The entry *nadir* reveals the main characteristic of the dictionary: it was written for advanced students of English (the number of entries exceeds twelve thousand). There are cases, however, where pronunciation is given − *bow* and *use* (Introduction XXXIV) − and there are many entries where the various meanings of the entry-word are distinguished: for example *disk* as 'structure in a spinal column' and as 'flat plate for computer storage'.

Some of the features of the BBI dictionary are not described very well in the Preface or on the back cover (the two are written in a similar tone): there a r e dictionaries where the grammatical information is present to at least the same extent as in the BBI (Hornby, *The Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English* and the *Longman dictionary of contemporary English,* both of them in British and American editions). Both these dictionaries give the collocation 'administer an oath' and the OALD also gives 'inflict a wound', 'hatch a plot', 'roll a hoop' (the BBI claims that they cannot be found "in any existing dictionary", Preface VII).

The BBI combinatory dictionary of English is not the first dictionary of English collocations. Albrecht Reum's *A dictionary of English style* was first published in 1931 (and went through a number of editions later) and J. I. Rodale's *The word finder* in 1947 (based on the previously published *Adjective-finder* and *Verb-finder*). The differences between the three dictionaries of collocations are obvious from the way they treat the word *access* (the synonyms included in Reum have been left out):

REUM	RODALE	BBI
access, s. (1) *Zutritt* . . . to have, to gain, to obtain ~ to a p., to the safes of a bank, to one's library. − A p. is difficult/easy of ~; a room easy of ~; (mountain) is difficult of ~. − (2) *Anfall* . . . ~ of fury, ~ of generosity	ACCESS *adjectives* impregnable; casual; unrestricted; momentary; exclusive; strange; convenient; direct; expeditious; easy *verbs* bar − ; deny − to; desire − ; disdain − ; shut off − ; stop up − ; survey − ; throng − .	access n. l. to gain, get ~ 2. to deny ~ 3. direct, easy, free, unlimited; limited ~ 4. (computers) random ~ 5. ~ to (we gained/got ~ to the files; ~ to a building)

Both Reum and BBI give only three verbs collocating with *access* but BBI distinguishes positive and negative meanings and is based on contemporary current speech. Rodale offers twelve collocating verbs (but not *gain* and *get*) and ten collocating adjectives, compared with five verbs in

BBI and none in Reum (*easy/difficult of* is a fixed phrase). The comparison of the three dictionaries shows that BBI is smaller in extent when compared with Rodale (which was not compiled for learners of English) but certainly better organized than the other two dictionaries. It is also based on current American (and British) English and includes a number of usage notes (e.g., *dissertation* and *thesis* in American and British English, *private practice* in British English, *girl*).

There are a few collocations in the BBI dictionary whose inclusion may be questioned: *Canadian French, French Canadian, Old English, the Holy Land, a registered Republican, Russian roulette.* They may be regarded as technical terms or even as multi-word lexical units in which the meanings of the individual words are not fused.

The BBI combinatory dictionary of English certainly fills a sorely felt gap (see under *gap*). It is well devised and well suited to the needs of learners of English.

Josef Hladký

John Updike, **Roger's Version**, Knopf, New York 1986, 329 pp.

At Brno in April, 1986, responding to a question about work in progress, John Updike said that his forthcoming novel, *Roger's Version,* is a re-telling of *The Scarlet Letter,* a sequel to *A Month of Sundays,* and heavily researched. One of the characters is named Est*h*er, very near *H*ester; her husband, whom she apparently betrays, is named Roger; her lover is Dale, simplifying Hawthorne's Dimmesdale; and there is a custody fight over an infant named Paula, similar to a scene involving Hawthorne's Pearl. The deeper connection to *The Scarlet Letter,* however, is in the development of the conflict between science and religion, with a Hawthornian ambiguity in a scientist who has faith and a professor of theology (and former minister) who is a skeptic. Even more convincing than that connection is the way Updike embeds the novel's actions and meanings in New England, laying claim to being the twentieth-century New England writer most significantly in the tradition of Hawthorne. For all of his concern about the New England ethos, Updike's sharpest focus, like Hawthorne's, remains on the characters' inner feelings rather than social relationships.

As a sequel to *A Month of Sundays, Roger's Version* is an advance, but perhaps *A Month of Sundays* is not one of Updike's stronger novels. They share a self-pitying middle-aged male as central character, but it is a bit difficult to see the suave Bostonian, Roger Lambert, evolving very naturally out of Rev. Marshfield. The form of *Roger's Version* is more ambitious and more effective, for the most part, and if Marshfield's cure worked he might become as pretentious as Lambert.

The heavy research that went into the novel results in considerable attention to theology and to computer science. The purpose is to sharpen the contrast in values into a major conflict, centered around using a computer to prove the existence of God. The climax occurs on Good Friday. Neither Dale's computer graphics nor Roger's heresies, however, are satisfactorily woven into the fabric of the novel — the seams always show — with the result that the heavy research gives the impression of existing alongside the story rather than at its core. Whatever interest Updike has (or had) in these fields is so far from the center of the insights that produce his best writing as to seem irrelevant.

A writer so talented and charming — a writer who produced such compelling works at such a young age — always runs the risk of having his recent work compared with his earlier work, usually to the disadvantage of the newer work. Such is the case with Updike. *Roger's Version* forms a triad of New England novels with *A Month of Sundays* and *The Witches of Eastwick.* In depth of characterization, strong story line, and basic control of tone (and in spite of his success in conveying New England), these novels don't compare with the three Rabbit novels. Or, of stories partaking most convincingly of New England, the Maple stories in *Too Far To Go* compel attention and invite re-reading, unlike *Roger's Version* and its companions. Still, John Updike remains one of America's pre-eminent story tellers, and *Roger's Version* rises above its flaws to be a good story, told with Updike's characteristically subtle touch.

Allen Flint