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comprehension and studying new expressions and useful phrases. Other language skills (eg. writing doctor's referral) are also developed. Possible mistakes can be corrected after consulting Answer Key at the end of the book.

What is important to stress is the fact that not only medical students and doctors but linguists as well may profit from this interesting book. The large corpus of about one hundred tapescripts of D-P dialogues, which is accompanied by four cassettes, forms a great source for anglicists interested in the introduced field of study. Their analyses may bring a deeper insight into the flow of language used between doctors and patients, and as a result, a new, revised version of this book could be created.

There are many features of the D-P communication we may examine as linguists. For example, it would be very interesting to study the role of questions and answers in D-P interaction. Another feature we could focus on is the politeness and its language manifestation in this kind of conversation. The structure of the corpus offers to compare the British English and American English versions of the same dialogues. Another comparison may be aimed at the different medical specialities, etc.

Undoubtedly, Mária Györffy has prepared a very useful book. Students of the Medical University of Pécs, Hungary, have already been benefiting from it for eight years and, hopefully, Czech students of medicine and linguists-anglicists will experience the same joy.

Miroslav Černý

**Prem Poddar.** *Violent Civilities: English, India, Culture.* Aarhus: Aarhus UP, 2002, 214 p.

In his widely-researched work Prem Poddar addresses the issues of discourse formation in colonial as well as post-colonial India and the role of English studies in this process. Poddar points out the "epistemic continuities" of colonial and nationalist discourses and calls for a new critical awareness about the teaching of English in contemporary India.

In an attempt to put this demand into practice, Poddar offers a detailed survey of how the introduction of the English language, English literary studies and, more generally, Western secular education was employed in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Poddar subscribes to Gauri Viswanathan's thesis that the introduction of the above was operative in "maintaining and consolidating British supremacy in India" and providing the colonial rulers with an "effective strategy of containment". English literature was thus instrumental in supplying the "sanction of higher motives" to a process of economic exploitation and imperial domination. The chapter "Englishing India" covers the individual stages of this process. The author finds little difference between the original Orientalist approach toward education (as represented by the policies of the Governor-General Warren Hastings) and the Anglicist approach that took its place in the nineteenth century, for, in his view, "through both projects, strategies and tactics oriented toward the consolidation of power and the continuation of the colonial enterprise were manifest".

One of the major themes of the book is the survival of the dominance of English literary culture in Indian education even after the collapse of imperial rule: echoing Chandra Chatterjee's notion of colonial nationalism as a derivative discourse, Poddar reminds us of the complicity between the earlier imperial discourses and the ensuing nationalist ones, for the "construction of nationalist intellectuals occurred primarily through the repressive and discursive state apparatuses of the empire". Thus he convincingly demonstrates how "the developmental discourses actually sustain colonial, anglicist and orientalist regimes, even as they set out to oppose them".

A critique of the *Haksar Commission Report* (1990), a document on government policy toward cultural institutions, forms the core of the chapter entitled "'The State of Culture' National Imaginings". Poddar starts this part with a historical and contextual inquiry into the term culture and comments somewhat sketchily on the various uses of the concept by thinkers such as Mathew

Arnold, J.S. Mill and T.S. Eliot (in the colonial context) and Raymond Williams (in postcolonial times). His understanding of the term – “culture as a discursive construct; arena of struggle and change; a system of difference, a symbol-forming activity as a ‘process of translations’; culture that can be understood in terms of “silences and distortions”; culture as a form of ‘hybridity’” – is informed by insights of poststructuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault, Gayatri Spivak and, most notably Poddar’s teacher, Homi Bhabha. In a revealing critique of the *Haksar Commission Report* the author identifies a variety of problems symptomatic of such discourse: a replication of age-old prejudices regarding the ‘peripheral territories’, which can be traced back to colonial anthropological writing; exclusions of whole areas from the project’s scope; missing historical contexts; vague generalities and insufficient theoretical explanation of some key relationships, most particularly the relationship between culture and state. By means of several insightful probes into the ideological underpinnings and rhetoric strategies of the *HCR* the author indicates how notions such as ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’ are discursively created by means of “evasions, silences and generalities” and also how a sense of seeming neutrality, impartiality and objectivity is fashioned. In this connection Benedict Anderson’s notion of ‘imagined communities’ is invoked: we are reminded that in the realm of official discourse on national culture a “particular dominant imagination comes into being at the expense of others”. In order to be able to see this process more clearly a critic should adopt an outside perspective and view the “‘performative’ everyday imaginings of the nation” not from the center, but from “the fissiparous margins”.

In the closing parts of the book a certain sense of crisis in English studies – as it is practiced in India but also in the “metropolis” – is identified. Against the practice of teaching literature under the spell of the traditional New Critical approaches, which, as we are told, remains the dominant approach to literary studies in most English departments in India, Poddar advocates a cultural materialist approach to literary studies and proposes a number of ways how to deal with literature and culture more productively: one should take into account recent developments in structuralist and post-structuralist theory, and approach texts with regard to their respective contexts; one should beware of liberal assumptions that present contingent, culturally specific views and value judgments as universal time-tested truths; the artificial boundary between elite culture and popular culture needs to be further problematized and so does the boundary between Indian texts written in English and those in the local vernacular; scholars should not forget their “own location and imbrication” in the theories they employ, a constant negotiation of one’s own positions and problematizing of any “received notions” is well-advised; one’s research fields that should be related to issues of global concern and should not be allowed to turn into a “research field(s) in (themselves)” and, perhaps most importantly, one should not evade questions of power for “it is not just texts as they appear or come to us for consumption that need to be studied but the whole process of production and distribution, such that the ideological operations or the repressive procedures of power are demystified”.

Prem Poddar’s *Violent Civilities* covers a lot of ground. The author is seasoned in recent post-structuralist and post-colonial theories and communicates his ideas with a remarkable degree of ease and sophistication. The book works on at least two levels: on the theoretical front it draws our attention to several key figures in post-colonial studies – most notably Bhabha, Spivak, Said, Viswanathan, Chatterjee and also Michel Foucault – and reminds us of some of their key ideas and concepts. These are further developed and productively applied in the more analytical parts of the book when official discourses on education are examined or when the epistemic continuities in regard to English studies at Indian universities are highlighted.

Tomáš Pospíšil