

syllabus, he says that 'we must begin by discarding the musty heirlooms and bric-a-brac of the past. We must release the syllabus from the stranglehold of Shakespeare. We must shut out the poets who wrote in England more than a hundred years ago. We must put the longwinded Victorian novelists back into cold storage'. And, of the problems that African students have in making Shakespeare meaningful to their lives, he says:

All interpretation continues to come directly from above. The student's job is merely to suck up what he can, filter it through his consciousness, and flush it out at the appropriate moment. No love of literature blossoms from this dreary process. Transforming oneself into an efficient intellectual water-closet is very hard work, especially when one has to wrestle with heavy, outdated materials, and no African who has been through such torture is likely to remember it as an experience he would voluntarily repeat later in his life.

No one with any experience of teaching Africans in this country can doubt the justice of his remarks.

Both writers also share a regard and enthusiasm for African literature, but Professor Lindfors, because his arguments are more thorough and persuasive, is a better advocate of it. On the subject of persuasiveness, whilst recognizing that this is always a very subjective matter, I feel that Mr Couzens has not sufficiently justified his description of Captain Blair's *The Bloody Orkneys* as 'our greatest poem' in English.

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Deborah Fanaroff, *South African English Dialect: A Literature Survey*.  
Institute of Languages, Literature and Arts. Pretoria, 1972.

Deborah Fanaroff's is the second report on 'The position of the Official Languages in the Republic of South Africa', a study undertaken by the Human Sciences Research Council. The preface states that the orientation of the survey is sociolinguistic and that this report therefore 'contains a fairly lengthy exposition of the sociolinguistic viewpoint

and methodology'. The dual aim of the report is to 'assist those concerned with education' and to 'help explain to a broader public some of the objectives and achievements of linguistic research on South African English'.

Miss Fanaroff reviews the work done on the characteristics of South African English (SAE), those characteristics by virtue of which it differs from Standard Southern British English. She confines herself mainly to the descriptive studies undertaken in this country, devoting a relatively small part of her report to the prescriptive work. In the general introduction the writer remarks helpfully to the uninitiated that 'the dialects of a language may differ from each other in terms of the phonological characteristics, and they may be distinguished from one another by distinctive words or grammatical constructions'. (p. 2) The report is therefore broadly divided into a section on the phonological characteristics of SAE and the concomitant social and sociological factors by which they seem to be influenced; a section on distinctively South African vocabulary and idiom; and a section on proposals for future research.

As her point of departure Miss Fanaroff understandably uses the excellent work done by William Labov in New York City on the phonological aspects of social dialects. I say understandably, for a grasp of the research done by linguists in South Africa presupposes an understanding of the methodology and views of Labov. Hence it is frustrating in the extreme to be baulked at the outset by an unaccountable reticence on the part of the writer with regard to Labov's theories. In discussing this linguist's amplification and substantiation of Martinet's views on linguistic change, she remarks:

In the first place, if Martinet were right, all changes in the sound system should be attributable to structural readjustments: once a *state of symmetry* has been reached (*I will not define here what this means*) there should be no further change.

(p. 8)

Again, on page 9, the writer remarks:

A third interesting point that emerges is that it is really only casual speech that is governed by *this tendency to symmetry*. It

seems to be implied, though not actually stated, that *the symmetrical system* is in some ways the most natural, or easiest, for the human speaker...,

and later, on the same page:

...developments in formal speech are less likely to be governed by *this tendency*... \*

It is difficult to guess at what would be made of this by 'the teacher [who cannot] be expected to be a dialectologist' or by the 'broader public', at both of whom this report, according to the preface, is aimed. As a specialist avowedly writing for non-specialists, Miss Fanaroff could have contrived to present the argument more comprehensibly.

What does emerge from the discussion of Labov's work is that speech is subject to change because of stigmatization by a prestige-group, either from above or from below. Before proceeding to a discussion of studies of SAE pronunciation, the writer adds that 'pressure from above is very much on the wane in SAE'.

The names of linguists referred to who figure in the study of South African English pronunciation are those of Lanham, Hopwood and Hooper, in this order. Lanham's research into the phonological characteristics of SAE appears to be the most satisfactory. It is interesting to note that Lanham chooses to use Standard British English as the frame of reference in his study of the divergence from the norm of SAE because 'dialect conscious South Africans still regard RP [Standard British English] as the norm'. (p. 11) The writer adds illuminatingly that:

In Lanham's view, SAEP is hallmarked by a standard of set trends away from the norms of RP, with pretty well all SAE speakers diverging from the RP norms in the same directions, but some diverging further than others. For each point of difference, therefore, SAE speakers differ among themselves, not in the kind of deviation they exhibit, but in the degree to which they exhibit it... Lanham believes that SAEP originated in Settler English, the speech that emerged in the Eastern Province among children and grandchildren of the 1820 Settlers, and was quite uniform even

\* My italics

though 25 original dialects were represented in the original Settler group, also RP.

(p. 11)

The anomaly of this uniformity is accounted for by the development of a classless society within the Settler community. In the Eastern Province, it appears, social stratification is not reflected in linguistic variation, and the most extreme forms of SAE are heard in the Eastern Province, uniform across the generations.

The writer traces Lanham's research and refers to his system of 'variables' in a lucidly explanatory manner. (She records a particular interview with an 'over-fifty' subject to establish his 'style'. It is that with an interviewee who was on his deathbed, and 'was therefore speaking very colloquially' (p. 15). The reader may be forgiven if, with due respect to the interviewer and his laudable aim, he wonders whether the methods of the 'pure linguist' do not at times verge upon the ghoulish! )

Lanham further explores the probable influence of the Afrikaner and the non-English newcomer on SAE. He comes to the interesting conclusion that it is only since the marked influx of the Afrikaner to the cities in the late 1920s that Afrikaans has shown any substantial influence on SAE. In fact, 'the only phonological feature which is clearly due to the influence of Afrikaans is one which is far more prominent in the under-40 age-group than above that age-level' (p. 17).

Under the heading 'Lexicographical Tradition' Miss Fanaroff then discusses the work of Pettman, Swart and others. She reports favourably on *The Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles* and then proceeds to a brief discussion of the *Index of English Usage in Southern Africa*.

Although the writer of this report frowns upon certain forms of prescriptivism, she allows that prescriptivism can be associated with a certain amount of agonising about the fate of English. What Miss Fanaroff objects to are the 'value judgments that a pure linguist would hesitate to make', such judgments as are, in her opinion, made by the *Index of English Usage in Southern Africa*. One wonders, however, whether a compromise between the descriptive and the prescriptive may not be desirable; whether, in fact, both the probe and the scalpel

may not be put to effective use.

After a general 'overview' of the research discussed, the writer suggests that:

...a fairly large-scale study of social and regional dialect phenomena in South African English... may yield insights that smaller-scale investigations have not yet been able to obtain.

(p. 49)

In this connection she remarks upon the debt to Lanham who has provided a 'conceptualisation and a point of departure' (p. 50).

Miss Fanaroff includes a bibliography which should prove most useful to the prospective student of South African English Dialect.

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*New Movements in the Study and Teaching of English*, ed. Nicholas Bagnall. Temple Smith, 1973, 255 pp., Boards £2.75

Beginning with a bird's eye view of the ideas of English educationists in different parts of the world, this collection of essays is directed at teachers in specific social contexts in Britain. The essays range from a critique of the techniques that the educationist might use to the experience of the 'consumer' of the educational system ('The Consumer Report' by a sixth form student). The collection therefore aims at covering the field fairly comprehensively from different points of view.

For all their diversity, common to all the essays are certain assumptions about the teaching of English as a mother-tongue. (Assumptions which, in the South African context, are still somewhat revolutionary challenges to the status quo). In brief, these beliefs include: the need to organize education around the pupil's own needs and attitudes; the belief that English has no specific, delimited content to teach, but is concerned with the total experience of the person; the conviction that the mechanics of language should 'have their place but be in their place'. The aim of English teaching can therefore be summed up by the epigram: 'not learning to talk and write, but writing and talking to learn' (according to Nancy Martin, whom Anthony Burgess quotes in his essay 'The case for diversity').