



Book Review

Daniela Francesca Viridis, Elisabetta Zurru, and Ernestine Lahey (Eds.), *Language in Place: Stylistic Perspectives on Landscape, Place and Environment*. John Benjamins, 2021; ISBN: 9789027208415.

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The emergence of ecolinguistics in the later part of the 20th century reveals the continuing relevance of spatial concepts to linguistics and linguistic theory. A case in point is landscape stylistics which interprets the linguistic strategies used to depict physical places in discourse and reflects on the significance of these representations for the reader. The book *Language in Place: Stylistic Perspectives on Landscape, Place and Environment* covers a variety of texts of ecolinguistic type, ranging from poetry, biblical texts, fictional and non-fictional proses, to newspaper articles, condo names, online texts and exhibitions. The eleven case studies included in this book provide an overview of how landscape, places and environments are represented in distinctive linguistic skills and how the related terms resulted from such skills evolve across contexts.

In addition to the Introductory Chapter, there are eleven chapters in the book. Chapter 2 by Andrew Goatly examines the use of place and direction adjuncts in marked themes (any sentence elements other than Subject in initial position) for their symbolic significance. By analysing ten of the poems in A. E. Housman's work *A Shropshire Lad*, Goatly argues that the potential significance of the marked themes is dependent on the (themes of) conceptual metaphors catalogued in the website "Metalude" and compiled by Goatly himself from 2002 to 2005, such as HEALTH/LIFE IS HIGH, RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY/COHESION, DIFFERENCE IS DISTANCE and ACTIVITY IS MOVEMENT (FORWARD). Descriptive details of place adjuncts, many to do with the landscape and its ambient weather, are symbolic of emotions of various kinds, including coldness for fear, colourlessness for monotony, dark for sadness, and light for hope. These adjuncts of place and direction, which are foregrounded in marked theme position, are of importance to literary interpretation.

In Chapter 3, Ernestine Lahey addresses text-world landscape construction in the two poems by Canadian poet Alden Nowlan, focusing on how it is linked to the "death by

nature” theme. Her analysis suggests that literary landscape is mainly construed from an assembly of non-locative noun phrases by way of metonymy and schema-activation. She also points out that the opposite metaphorical undercurrents exist in the poems, such as weak and powerful, civilized and wild, baseland and hinterland. In the first poem *Hens*, wildness and savagery of hinterland is inherent in the orderly human space of the farm, thus forming a binary-oppositional relationship. In the second poem *Canadian January Night*, the warmth of home is contrasted with the savagery of the winter landscape. Lahey’s study suggests that Text World Theory could rationalize bidirectional metaphors and contribute to successful literary landscape representation.

In Chapter 4 Nigel McLoughlin explores how the poet Derek Mahon makes use of liminality as a device to create mental toggling effects for readers. He particularly focuses on the points on which the reader’s attention is refocused from one world to another. In *Beyond the Pale*, the spatial equivalence between different locations, together with three liminal times, creates a mental superimposition for the narrator and the readers. Similarly, the seascape of the poem *Rathlin* acts as a world where historic and modern events are made to be co-present, and where the screams referred to in the Rathlin massacre echo back to the “last scream” of the first line of the poem. McLoughlin concludes that the poems act as liminoid spaces, which, once the reader agrees to enter, can change their perception of spatial and temporal separations, and offer possibilities for them to imaginatively travel between these worlds.

Chapter 5 by Karolien Vermeulen centres on how city space is construed in the biblical text by means of framing and metaphor theory. The cities in the Bible appear as characters with relationships to God. For example, the primary difference between Jerusalem and Babylon lies on whether they abide by God’s law and order. Because of Jerusalem’s disobedience, the city was depicted as a whore, an adulteress, a harlot in the conceptual metaphor THE CITY IS A WOMAN. Similarly, the metaphor THE CITY IS AN ANIMAL envisions the city as a helpless creature. The metaphor CITY IS A PLANT OR A TREE symbolizes the city was overtaken by enemies when its fruits were eaten. The dehumanized conceptual metaphors such as THE CITY IS AN OBJECT, THE CITY IS A THRESHING FLOOR, and THE CITY IS A LINE ON GOD’S PALM reveal that the city lost its agency. The metaphor THE CITY IS A LIGHT reminds people that it is the light that brings God and Jerusalem together. As manifested, conceptual metaphors, together with related literary metaphors, exhibit the creative constructive power that language has in city-scaping.

In Chapter 6, Karin Christina Ryding deals with twentieth-century fictional prose. She investigates the relation between language and landscape in Frank Herbert’s classic space opera *Dune* (1965), after identifying a research gap in the analysis of Herbert’s strategic development of Arabic terms and how they interlace with imagined desert setting. Ryding argues that Herbert’s creation of Arabic language lexicons can be analysed threefold: name and naming, language and landscape, language and environment. First, in the *Dune* series, not only inhabitants but also landscapes of the desert planet Arrakis, are conferred Arabic or Arabic-sounding names. Such name-creation adopts a strategy of cognitive

estrangement with synaesthesia or phonosymbolism, which is likely to induce readers to think of asceticism, mysticism and messianic power. Besides, Herbert flourishes the *Dune* text with Arabic-inflected narrative, as it were, through extensively borrowing Arabic lexical items. She interweaves the language with both landscape and environment to deploy the reader's interpretation of time, art, social distance and future culture. The shift of place names as well as the accumulation of characters' titles take place with characters morphing into new identities, indicating Herbert's wide-ranging attempts to colour his narrative with exotic but not entirely alien nomenclature.

Chapter 7 by Jennifer Smith concerns place-making strategies based on the literary analysis of Iain Sinclair's *London Overground* and the descriptions of the semiotic landscape of Shoreditch, one of the most prominent gentrified neighbourhoods in London's East End. The author posits that the concept of "authenticity" does not remain unchanged. For example, the shop signs which are representative speech acts on the surface primarily are found to perform a directive invitation function for customers to spend more money. Some chain shops like 'Pret à Manger' deliberately hide their chain store character in order to fit into the local semiotic landscape. The author's qualitative analysis only hints at the possibilities of interdisciplinary research on urban places and leaves us with a broader question of whether narrative place-making patterns can also be quantitatively verified.

In Chapter 8, Kristin Berberich uses a corpus-based approach to analyse how the city of Boston is discursively created as the place of Marathon Bombing in 2013 and as the place of resilience a year after the event. The target "Boston Marathon" (BM) corpora were collected over a period of seven days pre-/post-event in 2013/2014 from the Nexis database in 2013/2014, while the reference corpus was extracted from the newspaper section of the period of 1990-2012 from the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Both WordSmith Tools and Wmatrix were used for the analysis of semantic domains, modality, transitivity and the function of social actors(agency). The author finds that in the corpus of BM 2013, expressions of low modality occur exceptionally frequently as opposed to the reference corpus, whereas in that of 2014 higher level of modality, the superlatives and metaphorical expressions are frequently used to reinforce the discourse for the city. In terms of transitivity, an overuse of passive constructions was found in BM 2013 to portray the city as passive and stunned, while in 2014 a sense of determination and group solidarity is made prominent in the material process. Such contrastive semiotic skills highlight the city's evolving reclamation discourse and demonstrate that Boston reclaims its agency and turns a place of tragedy into the one of resilience, strength and unity.

In Chapter 9, Peter K. W. Tan argues that the notion of authenticity might be a less useful concept in the postmodernist world in the naming of residential buildings. The naming choices that were assumed to be true to a city's history, location and environment were generally judged to be authentic. But the idea becomes problematized in the context of multiple and changing identities. Singapore, a multi-ethnic community, could be seen as a multi-authored text, so to speak. Both building names and street names communicate something about the city, so their names could be variously denominated. Stylistic

deviations such as exogenous language, grammatical illiteracy, orthographic manipulation, transgressive names are acceptable, because such seemingly inauthentic naming choices reflect the city's multiple identities and showcase the city's playfulness and stylishness in language creation.

Chapter 10 by Daniela Francesca Viridis explores how an ecological alternative discourse advocating respect for animals was constructed based on a cat corpus that she collected and retrieved from the website of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, an English charity rehoming strayed animals. The theoretical framework of functional grammar is applied in this article, and the cats' agency is encoded in the experiential metafunction of the corpus. The relational process type is found to be the most frequently used, the material process the second most recurrent, and the mental process the third most, which combine to depict the cats as individual agents dynamically engaged in doings and happenings of various kinds. Besides, human-like behavioural process as well as verbal process are also found in the cat corpus, highlighting the cats' paralinguistic communication and their agentive roles looking for prospective human companions. The cats are also portrayed as affectionate and agreeable with numerous positive value-laden expressions to spark off the empathy of website visitors and possibly persuade them to adopt the cats. The author argues that an alternative discourse gives more prominence to a zoocentric position rather than an anthropocentric position.

Chapter 11 by Elisabetta Zurrú investigates the stylistic choices that the museum exhibition has made to encourage visitors to a deeper engagement with ecology-related matters. In contrast with the usual "authoritative" museum voice, the exhibition "*The Science of Survival: Your Planet Needs You*" invites both children and adults to take part in a series of interactive activities and to reflect on what they can do to contribute to a more ecologically balanced world by the year 2050. The exhibition suggests that humans should put themselves at the service of the environment rather than assuming a dominant role. The final chapter also deals with an exhibition. Chapter 12 by Linda Pillière looks at the use of exhibition texts about the Museum of London and explores how the exhibition texts adopt linguistic strategies such as deixis, interrogatives, imperatives and attitudinal lexis to convey the city's diverse voices. The author argues that by engaging with visitors and including minority voices the city museums have the potential to become an icon of the city's identity and provide a special space for mutual understanding.

All in all, each of the eleven chapters of the book has its highlight or focus and altogether contribute to the success of the book both as "stylistics of place" — which foregrounds the affective and associative qualities of those represented spaces — and as "stylistics of environment" which reminds the reader of the urgent need for ecological balance.

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