
Editorial

C.B. (Brian) Cox and A.E. (Tony) Dyson: A Celebration

Brian Cox and Tony Dyson established *Critical Survey* in 1962. Over its long history, the journal has never before published four issues within a single year. This initiative, it should be stressed, will not be a one-off event; rather it marks a strategic milestone, a precedent signalling that from now on four issues per year will be the journal's default publication protocol. The main reason for this change is to facilitate 'widening access' and greater 'diversity'. Given that both of these terms have, however, become deracinated, let us make clear what they mean in the context of *Critical Survey's* vision, history, operations and future.

Cox and Dyson were passionately committed to the belief (one we wholeheartedly share) that literary, cultural and educational study can transform the intellectual and imaginative landscapes of both the individual and society. Theirs was not a passive belief. They set about promoting it by way of an extraordinary range of initiatives, with incredible energy and integrity. One such initiative, which has particular relevance to this journal, was the organisation of a long-running series of conferences for UK sixth form students who might be contemplating studying English Literature or related studies at university. These conferences were large-scale events with some 600+ school students and their accompanying teachers staying in university accommodation for a week, free to mingle with their peers, to listen to lectures from leading scholars, to participate in academic debate within small-group seminars led by younger lecturers, and hear – first-hand – poets of dazzling stature weave the magic of their words. The students' accompanying teachers not only participated in keynote events but also attended staff development programmes led by senior members of education faculties. In short, these were heterogeneous, festive occasions that provided an annual highlight for many who

participated. We certainly regarded them as such. The conferences successfully demonstrated that students, teachers, scholars, poets, schools, universities and colleges can and should establish creative, multifaceted relationships.

Critical Survey and its companion journal *Critical Quarterly* (although their editorial policies have long since diverged) were conceived within this educational matrix. There was a determination that contributions should resonate with the widest possible readership and the journal has therefore always emphasized that clarity of exposition is essential. Intellectually, Cox and Dyson were keen to break free from what they believed to be the constraints of an over-concentration on the traditional canon, the 'Great Tradition' of English Literature, as promulgated forcefully by the then enormously influential Cambridge academic F.R. Leavis. The journal from the outset engaged not only with literary history, but also with emerging fields of study, and in particular new fiction and poetry (early issues of the journal include wide-ranging reviews of both). Brian and Tony themselves provided authoritative, detailed, close readings of individual twentieth-century poems.

Critical Quarterly and *Critical Survey* also published between them the so-called educational 'Black Papers' (a term, perhaps unwisely, coined to indicate ironic juxtaposition to the government's 'White Papers') on proposals to introduce comprehensive education. These papers defended selective grammar school education, which they regarded as a ladder of opportunity for talented working class and disadvantaged students who might otherwise be denied any chance of social mobility. Though the Black Papers were highly controversial at the time, Brian was subsequently invited by the government to chair the 'Cox Report (1989): English for Ages 5–16', which established the early-years national curriculum for English, and which to this day is widely regarded as an enlightened educational intervention.

We should also pay independent tribute to Tony Dyson for his pioneering, audacious work as a gay rights activist. In those dark times, homosexual relationships were deemed criminally deviant and liable to imprisonment, yet Tony bravely publicized both his identity and address to establish the groundbreaking Homosexual Law Reform Society. Its role was essential in changing public opinion and in particular persuading Parliament in 1967 to legislate to decriminalize (though initially only partially) homosexual relationships. The journal of that society was published from the front room of Tony's Hampstead house, utilizing an offset litho printing press. The same printer was

also used to produce the early issues of *Critical Survey*! An educator to the last, in his will he left the proceeds of the sale of the home which he had shared with his life partner Cliff Tucker to the University of Wales, Lampeter (Tucker's *alma mater*). The university established in their memory a lecture theatre, scholarship and poetry fellowship.

We knew Brian and Tony personally and were honoured when they asked us to take on stewardship of the journal. There were no caveats, but we have always assumed a duty to preserve its essential ethos, while presuming responsibility to adjust editorial policy as and when required – taking account of prevailing educational and social contexts. Given that we have now been Editors of the journal for thirty years, this seems an appropriate point to take stock of our performance. First and foremost, we are pleased to have guaranteed the journal's continued existence. Largely this stems from the fact that early on we were fortunate to find a publisher that has supported us at every stage. Perhaps this reflects the fact that Berghahn Books is a rarity: a family-owned academic press prepared to mould its highly professional production protocols to take into sympathetic account the sometimes more flexible protocols of contributors and indeed editors! These editors have included over the years not only ourselves but also talented Associate Editors, in particular Andrew Murphy, Carol Banks and Andrew Maunder, who have helped the journal thrive and move forward. The journal's foundational commitment to new poetry has been retained, thanks to our Poetry Editors, from the outset John Lucas and more recently Ben Parker-Jones. In recognition of this foundational commitment, and as well as continuing to publish new poetry, we will be revisiting our archives over the coming issues to reprint some of the pieces that have appeared over the journal's history, starting this issue with a poem first published in *Critical Survey* twenty years ago.

There were also strategic developments that allowed the journal to enlarge both its local and international perspectives. The appointment, for example, of an Editorial Board has allowed us to draw upon an invaluable pool of expertise and also to build wider networks. We have also benefited from the introduction of new technologies (that were certainly not available to Brian or Tony, who relied on pen, pencil, typewriter and paper). In particular, these technologies have allowed for a streamlining of production protocols and perhaps even more significantly to reach via JSTOR a wider, more diverse audience. One remarkable consequence has been the steadily increasing international profile of *Critical Survey*. It is now read in virtually all regions where

the English language is relevant. Thematic issues have dealt with challenging extraterritorial topics such as 'Arab Shakespeares'. And contributors now submit essays and poems from across the globe.

In this issue Hussein Alhawamdeh analyses Shakespearean appropriation in Fadia Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep* (2014) to show how Faqir's novel establishes a new Arab Jordanian feminist trope of the willow tree, metaphorically embodied in the female character of Najwa, that does not surrender to the atrocities of masculine discourse. Bilal Hamamra, following the critical lines of new historicism, feminism and presentism, argues that Lady Lumley's *Iphigenia's* dramatization of sacrifice for the sake of a political cause is associated with Lumley's family's participation in the political culture of the 1550s. Mohammad Shafiqul Islam analyses Jhumpa Lahiri's latest book, *In Other Words*, as an autobiographical text that highlights the author's new journey to a different land and language. Christine Regan revisits Tony Harrison's filial sonnets, from his major ongoing sonnet sequence *The School of Eloquence* (1978–), which have been criticized for sentimentality, to show the extent to which the filial sonnets link empathy and politics and express powerful personal and political feeling in their own terms. Younes Saramifar highlights inadequacies in the binary of opacity and transparency by examining the works of Peter Lamarque and Clare Birchall on matters of narrative and secrecy. Fatimah Zarah Bessedik uses Martin Heidegger's theory of 'being' and 'dwelling' to analyse the notion of 'homelessness' in Marilynne Robinson's *Home*. Adam Hansen explores what Shakespeare will mean under the UK government's 'Prevent' agenda, and the effects such an agenda might have on how we engage with extraordinary renderings of Shakespeare on stage now, not least those created by Sulayman Al Bassam.

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