

mrtva. Različica mita je najdaljša ohranjena ob Evripidovi.

Alkestido omenjajo tudi v poklasičnem materialu, kar na zanimiv način priča o razvoju Alkestide kot o toposu dobre soproge v grškem imaginariju. Helenistična predstavitev v Kalimahovi (približno 305–240 pred našim štetjem) *Odi Apolonu* predstavlja vidik Admetove homoseksualne zveze z Apolonom. Uporabo virov v dolgem časovnem obdobju (8/7. stoletje pred našim štetjem – približno 5. stoletje našega štetja) avtorica utemeljuje s konceptom zgodovinopisja *la longue durée*, dolgega trajanja, ki je eden izmed postulatov šole *Annales*. V tradiciji šole *Annales*, ki sta jo leta 1929 ustanovila Marc Bloch (1886–1944) in Lucien Febvre (1878–1956), je koncept zgodovinopisja *longue durée* kasneje nadaljeval Fernand Braudel (1902–1985), ki je vztrajal pri pisanju totalne zgodovine in raziskovanju dolgih časovnih obdobj. Braudel je pokazal, da se čas giblje z različnimi hitrostmi; čas je razdelil na zemljepisni, družbeni in individualni. "Nekatere strukture, ki imajo dolgo življenjsko dobo, postanejo stabilne prvine neskončni vrsti generacij in ovirajo zgodovino, s tem da, da zavirajo in, da obvladujejo njeno iztekanje. Druge se hitreje izčrpajo. Toda vse so v isti sapi opora in ovira." Prej so zgodovinarji opazovali zgodovinski čas v perspektivi njegovega "vsakdanjega ritma", "kratkega časa in dogodka". Braudel dopolnjuje začetni odpor ustanoviteljev šole *Annales* do pozitivističnega zgodovinopisja, ki se osredotoča na politično zgodovino, vojne in države, velike moče, kronologijo, razvoj pa razlaga kot linearni.

Takšna analiza mitov o Alkestidi in Admetu v dolgem časovnem obdobju večini interpretov še vedno povzroča nepremostljive težave, saj vztrajajo pri delitvi na kratka časovna obdobja, se osredotočajo na posameznega avtorja in zagovarjajo nezdružljivost konceptov v celotni antiki, ker so se spreminjale države in ideologije. Z analizo Alkestide in Admeta v dolgem časovnem razponu avtorica pokaže, da se politični in ideološki konteksti sicer spreminjajo, vendar se podoba Alkestide v imaginariju kljub temu ne spreminja, saj moramo invencijo vzorne soproge Alkestide povezati z idejo strukture patriarhata, ki ga označuje dolgo trajanje.

Raziskovanje imaginarija antičnih žensk je preučevanje sanj o idealnosti in o idealnih modelih, ki jih v vsakdanjem življenju ni, ampak se pojavljajo kot kompenzacija in "tamponska cona", ki brani pred realnostjo. Alkestida uteleša najboljšo med soprogami, je izhodiščna točka za razpravo o idealnem modelu ženske, ki je ni (bilo), zato so si jo izmislili in postavili kot bran proti slabim imaginarnim in realnim sprogam.

Ena izmed prvih težav, ki jih povzroča raziskovanje imaginarija, je pravravno definicija imaginarija. Za Évelyne Patlagean je imaginarij vse tisto, kar je izven konkretne realnosti, torej področje lažnega in nedokazljivega. Vendar ne moremo reči, da je imaginarij imaginaren, torej namišljen. Imaginarij odseva sanje o ide-

alnosti, projicirane na družbo, vsebuje želje po uresničitvi idealnega stanja, ki ga v vsakdanjem življenju ni. Med realnostjo in imaginarijem je meja, ki je odvisna od posameznika, zgodovinskega obdobja in kulture: vsaka kultura ima svojo interpretacijo imaginarija ter določa odnos med otipljivo realnostjo in imaginarijem.

Imaginarij ima lastno strukturo in svoje principe evolucije, zato bi bilo absurdno zanikati njegovo povezavo z "zunanjo realnostjo". "Realnost" kot izhodiščna točka ima za raziskovanje imaginarija sekundarni pomen: bodisi realna ali izmišljena, delno ali povsem izmišljena dejstva in osebe se vpisujejo v idealno tipologijo. Imaginarij predstavlja idealno, zato se ne smemo spraševati, kakšna stopnja te idealne predstavitve je resnično obstajala, in ločevati imaginarnega od realnega, ampak vse jemati kot celoto. Imaginarij nastane kot odgovor na spremembo, kot "reakcija na nasilni vdor dejstev" v zavest duha, zato je imaginarij nekakšna "tamponska cona", ki brani pred realnostjo. Imaginarij je odvisen od "mentalne klime", zato je pri raziskovanju imaginarija nujna kontekstualizacija. Vsaka družba razvije svoje načine upora proti realnemu, tako da zanika ali sprevrta dokaze in njihov pomen, kar kaže na avtonomnost imaginarija in hkrati tudi na trajnost njegovih modelov. Na splošno vsak vidi tisto, kar hoče, in razume tisto, kar že ve. Značilnost imaginarija je tudi njegova globalnost, saj ga najdemo v vseh vidikih zgodovinskega življenja.

Ključna beseda, ki jo danes skoraj vsi uporabljajo, je kontekst. Po Vernantu lahko besedilo razumemo šele, ko razumemo tudi njegov kontekst, besedilo pa moramo brati kot ideološko naracijo, ki zrcali simbolno mrežo ideologije in se postavlja raziskovalcu kot uganka, ki jo mora dešifrirati, čeprav je pravravno reševanje ugank in iskanje "ključa" tista past, v katero se po Veynovem mnenju ne smemo ujeti, zaključuje avtorica, začenja pa z verzi iz Evripidove *Medeje*:

*Vse drugo ženske nas
navdaja s strahom: boj in lesket orožja;
a če v postelji nam vzeta je čast,
nihče ne zmore bolj morilskih misli.*

Karmen Medica

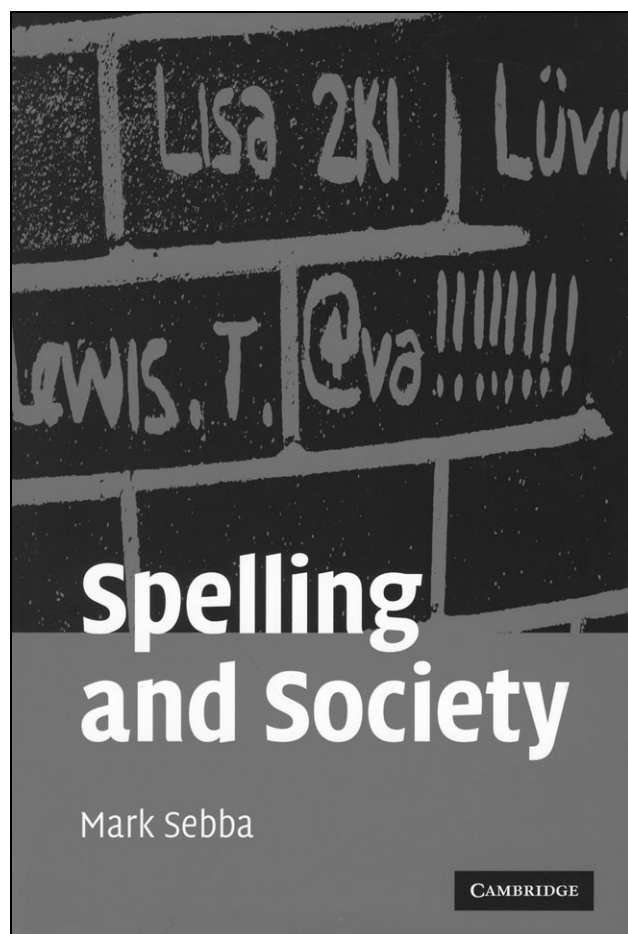
Mark Sebba: SPELLING AND SOCIETY.

THE CULTURE AND POLITICS OF ORTHOGRAPHY
AROUND THE WORLD.

Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 189 str.

Orthography matters to people, claims Mark Sebba, a reader in Sociolinguistics and Language Contact at the University of Lancaster (UK) in his most recently published book about signs, which apart from linguistic meaning also carry a social meaning. Orthography thus matters to all of us: not only teachers, professional

writers and publishers are concerned with it, but also the general public. While most people simply want to be able to spell correctly, some decide to intentionally break the rules of established orthographies in various ways. Orthography, as seen by Sebba, is therefore a *social practice* rather than just a set of rules which seek to form a correct spelling system. Defined as such, orthography can find its home in the area of Literacy Studies in which new perspectives to understanding literacy have lately been developed, namely, seeing it not simply as a way of deciphering a script, but also as a skill which enables us to apply this knowledge to specific linguistic situations in everyday life. We do orthography as much as we use it: attempts to "regionalize" one's language in terms of orthography as noticed in Slovenian-written blogs and messengers, for example, are just another way of orthographic creativity in everyday life, not to mention other such practices discussed by the author (graffiti, archaic spelling, language symbolism etc.). In this sense, Sebba's study is the first of its kind: his positioning of orthography within sociolinguistics rather than simply linguistics is an attempt to fill in the niche in the studies of human symbols and communication that has so far been neglected.



Seven chapters that discuss orthography from several angles follow a short introduction in which major research concerns are explained. The first chapter deals with different approaches to orthography. The author distinguishes between two models of orthography, an autonomous and a sociocultural, but finally argues for the latter one. Contrary to the predominant model, which sees orthography as a somehow "neutral technology", independent of social contexts (Street, cited p. 14) and in the domain of phonology, the author rather supports the view that orthography is to be studied within the social and historical contexts (Chapter 2). Standard language orthography is therefore also context-dependent: correspondence between sounds and characters that stand for them is language-specific, so are the representation of vowel length, use of diacritics and the choice of specific characters. The letter <j> does not correspond to the same sound in every language (<j> in Slovenian and many Germanic languages, but <x> in Spanish), similarly, <š> makes sense in Slovenian but not in German, where more than one letter is used to represent the same sound. But despite the seeming strictness of language's orthographic system, creativity is allowed in several fields. A case study of the Spanish <k> appears to be an interesting indicator of this orthographic play. While the sound <k> is in Spanish usually represented using <c> or <qu>, some subculture groups prefer to use <k> to stress their "otherness" or, also because of a reference to a Basque <k> – using spelling system, a parody to the Spanish-word spelling. In such contexts, spellings like Mierkoles Merkatu (for Miercoles Merkatu – Wednesday market) also bear a political message of Basque oppositionality towards the official state. Sebba claims that such attempts are a way of demonstrating one's "difference from" but at the same time also variability of language representation which, all in all, helps construct new identities and/or strengthen the existing ones as well as allowing for variations within a community.

In the third chapter, *Language contact, linguists, emergence of orthographies*, an interesting example from Manx is drawn to attention. Being a Gaelic language, the emergence of Manx's orthographic system is interesting as it was strongly influenced by conventions of the English spelling system, mainly as a result of bilingual priests and Bible translators who invented it in the 17th century. For an English speaker, Manx is comparable to its sister language Irish and is therefore quite simple to read.

But inventing orthographies is not only a matter of the past: as literacy has become one of the aims of different governments and organisations (UNESCO among them) throughout the world, development of writing systems is nowadays in the domain of professional linguists as well as social scientists and psychologists. As demonstrated by the author, this task is by no

means a simple one. For the potential users, it is in many cases significant – choosing the orthography of a majority language (such as Spanish in South America) in order to assign the minority language a similar status to the majority language, makes it look like the colonial language. This is of course contradicting to the wish of the ones who strive to distance their language from the colonial past (as for example Sranan English-Creole, where Dutch orthographic elements were omitted). This "ideological" element to which the whole of chapter 4 (*Postcolonial orthographies*) is dedicated seems to be, according to Sebba, incorporated in all orthographic systems and among other things, is proof for the author's initial position against the "autonomous" approach to orthography. In support of his position, many examples are given, ranging from Moldavian rejection of the Cyrillic alphabet in 1990, which was a clear introduction to the declaration of its independence from the USSR the following year, to the problem of loanwords, which comes with a range of dilemmas, one of which is also present in Slovenian. Should the famous Italian dish be spelt <pizza> or <pica>? If the first bears its etymological history with it, the second conforms to the standard orthographic conventions of Slovenian language. Some languages adapt all foreign words to the orthographic system of their own language, personal names included (<Niče> for Nietzsche in Serbian and <Šuberts> for Schubert in Latvian) while some keep the spelling of a word in its original form (<Spagetti> in German).

Chapter 5 introduces the reader to various orthographic problems which often appear when language users try to represent unstandardised variants of a language. Two case studies are given to demonstrate contrastive situations. The first one deals with Jamaican Creole, which is in fact not recognised as "writable", but is used as such by its speakers on various occasions. The author argues that the orthographic choices made in such situations represent an "informal ideology" (p. 126) of creating a language in a way that spelling emphasizes difference from Standard English (ex. <yuh> or <yu> for standard <you>). Differently, the Galician "war of orthographies" (p. 126) is about suffusion of the political and ideological. Two different viewpoints about the relation between Portuguese and Galician are discussed: differentiation, which sees Galician as a language independent from Portuguese, and reintegration which claims that structurally, Galician is in fact not a language, making it different from Portuguese. Each of these positions is associated with their own orthographic practices: differentialism is striving to distance Galician from Portuguese and thus uses aims to represent it as a language closer to Catalan, while reintegrationalism either combines graphemes of both languages (<ñ> as in Catalan, but also <nh> as in Portuguese) or uses "his-

torical-etymological" orthography which is in fact the one used for Portuguese standard language. This is a clear example of orthographies not just "reflecting" identities, but also creating them.

In the following chapter Mark Sebba turns from orthographies in the "context of language standardisation and elaboration" to the "subject of spelling reform in languages with established orthographies" (p. 131), which seems to be, unsurprisingly, an activity of extreme difficulty. This claim is supported with several examples of unsuccessful attempts to reform orthographies worldwide (as in Germany, for example). The exceptions are rare and motivated by a wish to establish either "symbolic renewal" (p. 155) of a nation (Cyrilic to Roman in Moldova) or are a consequence of powerful authorities. In such cases the agencies or governments who control education and/or the press may enforce the change regardless of public opinion.

In the last chapter, simply titled *Why do we spell?*, Sebba addresses two recent works that appeared in the British book market in early 2007, which question English spelling. Similarly, he describes the UK spelling competition problems and the concerns English people have because of the declination of knowledge of spelling at work due to the popularity of emails and text messages. This of course leads to the question of the purpose of spelling or, as the author puts it, "what is the compulsion to have a standardised, almost invariant system of orthography" (p. 159). The answer comes from his perspective on the sociocultural model, which sees orthography as being part of one's culture, in which humans tend to give meanings to activities in which they are involved. Sebba summarises that the themes that emerged from the discussion in the book are of social character. Identity, iconicity, interlinguality and authority are, despite the fact that each of them is independent, tightly connected with each other.

And just before the book provides us with an emergency *Glossary*, it is closed with a short paragraph, stylishly titled *So wot...?* in which one can read: "For those who want to know the message of this book, it is this. Orthographies are not simply remarkable technological achievements, though they are that. They are also complex social and cultural achievements /.../, microcosms of language itself, where the issue of history, identity, ethnicity, culture and politics which pervade language are also prominent" (p. 167).

It is because of this new approach that the book deserves at least a glimpse, though shame, *it costs an awful lot of moni*.

Ana Tominc