Pause and effect: Punctuation in the West. By MALCOLM B. PARKES. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993. Pp. xvi, 327. Cloth $55.00.

Reviewed by MARK ARONOFF, *SUNY/Stony Brook*

The jacket copy of this beautifully produced book proclaims that '*Pause and Effect* is destined to be a standard work', and I certainly agree. The admittedly small literature on punctuation contains no other work that comes close to this one in depth and breadth, though its scope is narrow, being restricted to Western Europe up to the nineteenth century. This judgment comes as no surprise, for Parkes is already the author of the standard works on medieval English scripts and scribes (Parkes 1979, 1991) and of numerous essays on the history of punctuation, most notably Parkes 1978. Still, it is a welcome event when the acknowledged expert in any academic field applies his knowledge to a book that is readable and accessible to all, as this one is.

The book is divided into an introduction, which provides a nice overview of the work, and four parts. P calls the first part, entitled 'Pause: symbols as notation', a 'sketch of the history of punctuation in the West', beginning with the earliest punctuated manuscripts. The history is divided mostly by periods, with the divisions between them based largely on the use of the punctuation marks and developments in their form. Thus, the first chapter deals with antiquity, when punctuation marks served largely as aids put in after the fact for readers who had to decipher scriptio continua texts whose words were not separated from one another. The second chapter treats the period after the fall of Rome when the spoken language had diverged far enough from Latin and written texts had spread abroad to lands where the native language was not Romance (especially England and Ireland), so that texts could be regarded as objects in themselves, rather than as just coded speech. Ch. 3 is devoted to the Carolingian revival of learning, Ch. 4 to the punctuation of liturgical texts, Ch. 5 to the development of modern punctuation marks, largely by the humanists, and Ch. 6 to printing.

The second part, entitled 'Effect: Symbols as signs', contains only two chapters. Ch. 7 deals with the two major functions of punctuation, rhetorical and grammatical. The rhetorical purpose of punctuation, which has become less significant in our time, at least when it comes to prose, is to guide the reader in the rhythm and timing of oral performance. Grammatical punctuation brings out the syntactic structure of a text. We think of modern punctuation as being largely grammatical, but P shows nicely how a system of punctuation has developed in the novel since the eighteenth century that leads the reader to mimic spoken conversation internally. Ch. 8 is concerned with the layout and punctuation of verse.

A couple of appendices bring us to the halfway mark and to the meat of the book: seventy-four plates, each a black-and-white photographic reproduction of a page of a manuscript or printed book. Facing each plate is a page containing three parts: a transcription of the relevant passage in the text, with word divisions where they are not given in the original and expanded abbreviations; an

English translation; and a commentary on the punctuation of this passage. The plates are arranged into twelve groups. The first nine of these are historical/topical and roughly follow Part I of the main text, with titles like 'The practices of scribes, and symbols employed by readers in antiquity' and 'Developments within the general repertory'. There is one group of verse passages and finally two large groups comprising over a third of the total that contain different copies of the same text, one group of exemplars and copies and another group containing examples from three periods of three texts (passages from Cicero, Augustine, and Boethius). In the preface to the book, P declares that 'The examples and plates are the core of the book, and afford the reader an opportunity to test my observations.' Given that the selection of texts is not random but rather designed to illustrate P's claims, I am not sure that they provide a test in any scientific sense of the term, but they are a wonderful pedagogical tool, both for the individual reader and, I would imagine, for a class. If ever there were a book that could make the history of punctuation fun, this is it. The book is also highly accessible: it presupposes no knowledge of its subject matter, contains an excellent glossary of technical terms, and is written in a clear style. For those who—like most students today—are unacquainted with the nature of scholarship, it provides a superb window into the world of someone who, like Dr. Science of radio fame, 'knows more than you do'.

But what interest beyond simple curiosity does this book hold for the working linguist? After all, most of us are taught from a very early academic age that the scope of linguistics extends only over primary spoken language and that written language is of little interest, except as a convenient recording device. Yet looking at the plates in this book, and their progression from Classical scriptio continua, which recorded the distinctive sounds of speech and nothing else, to a modern printed novel with its ability to conjure up animated conversation, one is struck by how much our own ideas of language have been colored by the form in which it is clothed in print. Written language comes to us already analyzed into words and sentences, and we all too readily accept this division as given, forgetting that it is in fact the product of two millennia of a traditional form of linguistic analysis. It is good to be reminded every once in a while that this analysis has a history and that it is not a part of the object of our inquiry, but rather a part of the inquiry itself.

And here is where one begins to wish for a companion volume, one devoted to writing systems beyond P's West. We know quite a bit about punctuation in a few of these, most notably the complex system of Masoretic punctuation that is used in the Hebrew bible. But what of punctuation in the Indian and Chinese traditions? P also touches briefly on music notation, but he does not discuss how its history is connected to punctuation. None of this should be taken as criticism, but rather as evidence that P has done his job. He has made me think about punctuation.

Perhaps too much, for in reading the book I began to notice its own punctuation, which is peculiar in places. I will give a few examples.

(1) Petrarch's sedulous attention to punctuation and his experimental application of it, were determined by a desire ... (83)

(2) As we have seen, the humanists demanded a more exact disambiguation of the constituent elements of a sentence, and sought to achieve a balance between delineating the rhetorical structure of a period, and drawing attention to the logical relationships expressed by its syntactical structures. (88)

(3) This can be illustrated by comparing the punctuation at the beginning of Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* in the first edition, with that employed by a modern editor. (88)

All of these are overpunctuated by modern standards. In 1, we find a comma after a long subject, common until the end of the nineteenth century, but no longer used. In 2, there is a comma between two verb phrases joined by *and* and another comma, much more unusual, after the first noun phrase of the two conjoined after the preposition *between*. In 3, there is similarly an unusual comma between the object of *compare* and its sister prepositional phrase beginning with *with*. All of these commas can be seen as syntactically motivated: they guide the parsing of the sentence. None of them, though, is necessary for disambiguation—each sentence has a single parse—and that is why they are no longer used, for, as P shows, modern punctuation is less concerned with representing the constituency of a sentence than with representing the writer's intention unambiguously. Of course, as P also shows so well, the punctuation of a book is not necessarily that of its author. An editor may very well have inserted all these commas.

I hope that Parkes will not be displeased with what I have learned, for in studying his punctuation I have done what he himself regards as the hallmark of his own work: to study the actual practice of punctuators, to analyze the data. This is what sets him apart from so many literary scholars and what makes this book so wonderful.

REFERENCES

PARKES, MALCOLM B. 1978. Punctuation or pause and effect. Medieval eloquence, ed. by J. J. Murphy, 127–39. Berkeley: University of California Press.

——. 1979. English cursive book hands. 2nd edn. Berkeley: University of California Press.

——. 1991. Scribes, scripts and readers. London: The Hambledon Press.

Department of Linguistics
SUNY Stony Brook
Stony Brook, NY 11789-4376

[Received 12 April 1994.]

El español en tres mundos: Retenciones y contactos lingüísticos en América y África. By GERMÁN DE GRANDA. Valladolid: Secretariado de Publicaciones, Universidad de Valladolid, 1991. Pp. 285. Paper 1,500 ptas.

Reviewed by CARMEN SILVA-CORVALÁN, *University of Southern California*

This book contains an Introduction (9–11) and twenty articles concerning the author's main area of expertise: the role of language contact, bilingualism, and linguistic substrata in the evolution and formation of African and American