

PARLANCE

PALA Newsletter

March 2006

Joensuu, Finland, location for this year's PALA conference



Editorial

Dear PALAns,

Already this is proving to be a packed year for PALA. The Style in Fiction Symposium at Lancaster University on 11 March promises to be an excellent mini-conference, and a thoroughly well-deserved recognition of Geoff Leech and Mick Short's groundbreaking 1981 book. Thanks to Mick and Geoff and their team of helpers at Lancaster for organising this event. Then there is the publication of the first volume in the *PALA Papers* series. This is *The Writer's Craft, The Culture's Technology*, edited by Carmen Caldas-Coulthard and Michael Toolan, and comprising selected papers from the 22nd PALA conference, held at Birmingham University in 2002. More details on this can be found below. And then, of course, we are gearing up to the annual PALA conference, this year hosted by Greg Watson at the University of Joensuu, Finland. If you haven't already registered for the conference, details on how to do so can be found in this newsletter. Enjoy the rest of the term!

Dan McIntyre

News

Cognitive Poetics and Creative Writing

The first course in Sweden combining *cognitive poetics* and *creative writing* was given in 2005 by PALA members Professor Eva Lilja and Dr Ulf Cronquist, of Gothenburg University, Department of Literature, Sweden. In the course entitled 'Writing and Cognition' ('Skrivande och kognition') students were examined for

their knowledge of, for example, Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* and proficiency in oral and written rhetoric. The successful course will be given again in 2006.

Whilst it might seem that approaching creative writing from a linguistic standpoint is a pretty obvious thing to do, Huddersfield University creative writing lecturer, David Gill, has found that within the field of creative writing this appears, in fact, to be the exception rather than the norm. David himself takes a stylistic approach to the teaching of creative writing and is currently researching the pedagogical issues surrounding the teaching of this subject. More news to follow later perhaps?

Preparations underway for PALA 2007

Peter Stockwell recently visited Japan and met Professor Masanori Toyota, organiser of the 2007 PALA conference in Kansai Gaidai, and representatives of the British Council in Japan. The dates of the conference have provisionally been set at 31st July - 2nd August.

Online resources on the PALA website

We are currently building up a list of links to useful resources on the PALA website at <http://www.pala.ac.uk/links/stylistics.htm>

PALA members are encouraged to send in details of any sites which they find useful to webmaster@pala.ac.uk.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Sunanta Wannasin Bell, who has gained her PhD from Nottingham, with a thesis on the Spatialization of Fiction and Interpretive Controversies in the Satanic Verses, *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*. The external examiner was Dr Laura Hidalgo Downing from the Universita Autonoma de Madrid. Sunanta is returning to Thailand to take up a university teaching post in Bangkok.

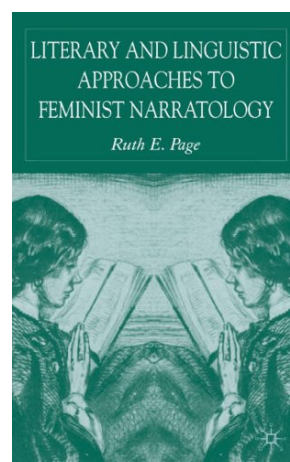
Congratulations to Dr Dany Badran (PhD Nottingham 2003, and now head of department at Notre Dame University in Lebanon) and his wife Pascale, who have just had a baby boy called Mark.

PALA Special Interest Groups

Narrative SIG

The Narrative SIG are proposing a panel for the upcoming PALA conference in

Joensuu. The specified participants have all agreed to this now, but, of course, it will be open to anyone to attend and contribute to in terms of the general discussion afterwards. Ruth Page is also currently compiling a directory of members' interests, publications etc. If you would like to be added to this directory, fill in the form at the end of the newsletter and return it to Ruth.



Other news from the Narrative SIG is that Ruth Page's new book, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Feminist Narratology*, has just been published by Palgrave. More details are available on the Palgrave site:

<http://www.palgrave.com/products/Catalogue.aspx?is=1403991162>

First volume of PALA Papers published



Donald Freeman writes:

I'm pleased to announce the publication of *The Writer's Craft, the Culture's Technology*, edited by Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard and Michael Toolan. This volume, published by Rodopi, is the first in the *PALA Papers* series of volumes containing selected and edited papers from annual PALA conferences. The book contains 16 papers from the 2002 PALA Conference in Birmingham on topics ranging from Dickens' *Bleak House* to imagetext on the Worldwide Web. Copies are available from Rodopi, Tijnmuiden 7, 1046 AK Amsterdam, or (in North America) at (800) 225-3998. PALA members should urge their university libraries to acquire a copy and put the series on their order lists.

The publication information is:

Caldas-Coulthard, Carmen Rosa, and Michael Toolan (eds). *The Writer's Craft, the Culture's Technology*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi. xxiii + 261 pp. ISBN: 90-420-1936-0. €57, -, \$71.

Donald C. Freeman
Editor-in-Chief, *PALA Papers*
University of Massachusetts Amherst

New courses

Huddersfield University have just launched a new MA in Modern English Language. The degree includes significant stylistics and pragmatics components, and teaching staff include PALA members Lesley Jeffries, Dan McIntyre and Derek Bousfield. The MA can be taken full- or part-time. A part-time, web-based distance-learning version of the MA is also available. Visit the English website at: http://www.hud.ac.uk/mh/english/courses_adminis/mamel.htm, or contact Dan McIntyre for more information.

Sheffield University have launched a new MA in Language and Literature, starting this September. Existing staff Sylvia Adamson, Joe Bray, Joanna Gavins, Jane Hodson, and Richard Steadman-Jones have recently been joined by Professor Susan Fitzmaurice and special Professor Katie Wales. Contact Joanna Gavins (j.gavins@sheffield.ac.uk) for more information.

Forthcoming Events

The major forthcoming event for PALA members is, of course, the annual PALA conference, this year held at the University of Joensuu, Finland. Plenary speakers include Professor John McRae (University of Nottingham and University of Avignon), Professor Suzanne Romaine (Oxford University) and Professor Mick Short (Lancaster University).



University of Joensuu, Finland

The conference website can be found at <http://www.joensuu.fi/fld/pala2006/>, and

the deadline for submission of abstracts is March 31st. These should be sent to pala26@joensuu.fi.

2006

Literature and the Cognitive Science
University of Connecticut, Storrs
6-9 April

Deadline for submission of abstracts has now passed

This conference represents the first-ever open-format, open-invitation event in the widening field of cognitive approaches to literature and arts; it will also be highly interdisciplinary, featuring, in addition to literature, arts, and theatre scholars, at least one cognitive scientist as a keynote speaker and others at various roundtables and panel discussions.

Contacts

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RaAM 6 – Researching and Applying Metaphor – Ten Years On
University of Leeds
10-12 April

Deadline for submission of abstracts has now passed

Theme

Metaphor in the real world.

Plenary speakers

Professor Ray Gibbs (Psychology, University of California, Santa Cruz)

Baroness Susan Greenfield, CBE (Director, the Royal Institution; Professor of Pharmacology, University of Oxford; Director, Oxford Centre for the Study of the Mind)

Dr Brigitte Nerlich (Institute for the Study of Genetics, Biorisks and Society, The University of Nottingham)

International Stylistics Conference, China (ISCC)

Deadline for submission of abstracts has now passed

This conference will be held at Tsinghua University, Beijing from June 16th to 18th, 2006 (registration on the 15th). The conference is sponsored by China Stylistics Association.

For more information contact Liu Nannan, wyxws@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn; tel. +86-10-62795726; fax +86-10-62784969; postal address: Liu Nannan, for Organizing Committee, ISCC, Department of English, Tsinghua University, Beijing 100084, P. R. China.

LINGUISTIC IMPOLITENESS AND RUDENESS:

Confrontation and Conflict in Discourse

3rd - 4th July 2006

University of Huddersfield, UK

Deadline for submission of abstracts has now passed

This two-day conference aims to foster research on what might be called linguistic 'impoliteness' or 'rudeness'. The conference aims to bring together a range of theoretical and methodological approaches exploring the notion of impoliteness and the usage of impoliteness phenomena in discourse. The conference also ties in with a special edition of the *Journal of Politeness Research* on impoliteness which will be published in July 2008.

Invited plenary speakers:

Prof. Janet Holmes, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Prof. Richard J. Watts, University of Berne, Switzerland.

Plenary panel will also include:

Prof. Lynne Andersson, Temple University, USA.

Prof. Timothy Jay, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, USA.

Conference Organisers:

Derek Bousfield (University of Huddersfield) and Jonathan Culpeper (Lancaster University)

Tel: Huddersfield + 44 (0)1484 473592 or Lancaster +44 (0)1524 592443

Email: impoliteness2006@hud.ac.uk

Webpage:

<http://www.hud.ac.uk/mh/english/impoliteness/index.htm>

IDENTITIES IN THE MAKE: MIGRATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (conference of the Spanish Association of Canadian Studies)

November 17-18, 2006

Residencia La Cristalera - Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Miraflores de la Sierra (Madrid)

For more information contact:

Pilar Somacarrera (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), pilar.somacarrera@uam.es

Future PALA conferences

Anyone (from anywhere in the world) interested in the possibility of hosting future PALA conferences is invited to contact the PALA Chair, Isil Bas.

The rise and rise of the PhD...

In the first (and probably last) of a very occasional series, for the benefit of anyone outside the British university system, Parlance is pleased to explain the confusing world of British academic qualifications, as we chart the rise and rise of the PhD...

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a postgraduate student in want of a lectureship must be in possession of a PhD. Once upon a time it was possible to get a full-time appointment in a British university with nothing more than a simple BA degree. Indeed, in what are often thought of as the halcyon days of higher education, postgraduate degrees were almost sniffed at, as if having such a qualification was tantamount to admitting that you

had written a master's thesis simply because you had been intellectually stunted at undergraduate level. The only respectable alternative to the BA was the MA degree granted by Oxford and Cambridge, not for academic endeavour but in recognition of the graduate in question having had the wherewithal to send off a cheque for ten pounds to the requisite bursar, having performed the breathtaking feat of staying alive for seven years after 'coming down'. As the equivalent of English BAs, Scottish MAs were tolerated, but there was an unspoken feeling that things would be better off all round if the Scots would simply fall in line with the English on this one. Genuine postgraduate degrees were almost unheard of, and the only doctorates that were granted tended to be either honorary ones or the DScs and DLitts conferred on senior academics as a valediction and companion piece to the traditional gold watch handed out at retirement. The very idea of actually expending any effort to obtain such a degree was, to the British academic, unthinkable. Besides, the only title deemed truly worth having in academia was that of 'Professor'. If you wanted to be called 'Dr' then you spent six years at a university medical school drinking hospital strength alcohol and stealing cadavers.

The truth was that, regardless of his intelligence (or relative lack of it), the British academic simply didn't need a postgraduate degree. Once he had got his first job (and in the early days it was always a he), all the fledgling professor had to do was avoid killing anyone on the university staff for approximately three years, and if he could manage this then tenure was virtually guaranteed. And once tenure had been granted, the academic in question need never do anything again. He could, if he so desired, spend his days reading the broadsheets in the Senior Common Room and organising the fixtures for the local cricket club. If he chose never to do another stroke of work there was nothing his university could do about it. Of course, they might not promote him, but these were the days when promotion was not the procedure that it is now. In this semi-mythical golden age of academia it was not at all unusual to begin a career as a lecturer and to end it at exactly the same point on the ladder. Tenure removed the necessity of ever having to worry about work-related matters ever again, simply because it removed the necessity of having to work. This seemingly wondrous system stemmed from the days when it was necessary to protect academic freedom and allow university lecturers to research and write about any subject at all, regardless of how controversial it might be, without fear of losing their jobs as a result. Of course, there were reasoned arguments that a professor of politics being openly critical of the government of the day might have considerably more to fear than a professor of English literature offering a controversial opinion on sexual metaphor in *Bevis of Hampton*, but the point about the British university system was that, if nothing else, it was fair – and that meant that tenure had to be offered across the whole spectrum of subjects on an institution's curriculum.

In fairness, the system tended to work reasonably well. Most academics were grateful enough to have been given a warm place to sit between the hours of ten and three that teaching the odd class and, if the vice-chancellor was really lucky, doing the odd bit of research, didn't seem like an unreasonable request. Especially once you had factored in the subsidised beer in the college bar. Of course, there were those who conspired to abuse the system, leaving most universities with at least three members of staff it desperately wanted to get rid of but couldn't, the crimes of hanging a fellow professor on a coat-hook and persistent peacock-worrying not being recognised as sackable offences in most university constitutions. However, such cases were rare, and as most of these academics tended to be desperate alcoholics, the revenue generated by what they regularly put over the college bar more than made up for the expense of paying their salaries.

Unsurprisingly though, such a system could not be sustained indefinitely, and since the practice of giving tenure had the unfortunate side effect of allowing the incumbent of the tenured position to remain in post long after he had passed into senility, it became gradually harder for the new graduate to gain a foothold on the academic career ladder. As a result of the increasing number of applicants for the limited number of posts available, during the 1970s universities found it ever more necessary to have some measure of distinguishing between candidates for a job, and at some point hit upon the novel idea of appointing the person with the most academic qualifications. This invariably led to a sharp upsurge in the number of graduates going on to do postgraduate degrees. Most of these were two-year MAs, which required writing an unfeasibly long thesis on some arcane aspect of one's subject, but even then Oxford and Cambridge managed to find a way of stamping their own inimitable brand of lunacy on the postgraduate market. Whereas at every other academic institution in the country students progressed from bachelor's to master's degrees, at Oxbridge they did it

the other way round. It was therefore not unusual to find an Oxbridge graduate with an MA going back to his or her college to study for a BLitt, or perhaps a BPhil. The Oxbridge authorities seemed to take a perverse pleasure in suggesting that postgraduate study was such an unworthy pursuit as to merit only a bachelor's degree. However, what had seemed like a solution to the problem of knowing who to appoint to a lectureship soon turned into a problem itself. For a considerable time, the surfeit of possible qualifications had most university interviewing panels utterly confused. How were they to distinguish between an Oxford BPhil and a Durham MLitt? What was the difference between an MSc from London and an MPhil from Cambridge? What about a Cardiff MMus and a Nottingham LLB? And was a BSocSci from Birmingham really better than an LLM with a Maîtrise en Droit Français on the side? This was to say nothing of the BMus, the MEng, the MPhys, and the abundance of other assorted alphabetic rewards available for questionable academic endeavour. When a university appointing panel almost offered a senior lectureship to a convicted cat-burglar, on the grounds that his CV had proclaimed 'GBH (Wakefield)', it was clear that a new means of defining academic worth was needed.

And so the universities turned to a weapon already present in their armoury. This was the PhD, the doctorate in philosophy, the highest degree that could be awarded for postgraduate research and the ultimate academic achievement. In truth, the PhD had been around for quite some time, the idea having been imported from Germany in the early twentieth century. However, because British academia had, until this point, been predicated on its academics doing the minimum amount of work necessary, no-one had ever found a use for it before. The Americans, of course, had embraced the PhD with open arms, which was perhaps another reason why the British had been put off it. But as the economic climate of the 1980s forced another method of paring down the sizable lists of applicants for lectureships, the PhD was brought out of storage and dusted down. Oxford, with its customary awkwardness, insisted on referring to it as the DPhil, but despite the quibbles over what it should be called, it was soon the case that any aspiring young academic had to have one, or they might as well resign themselves to an unthinkable career as a schoolteacher.

Now, with more and more people applying for fewer and fewer jobs, it seems that even a PhD is no longer enough. British universities now want publications – and preferably lots of them. And, for the first time in history, universities are beginning to come round to the idea that since their newly appointed staff are going to be involved in shaping the minds of impressionable teenagers, perhaps a teaching qualification might not be a bad idea either. So there you have it. The history of British academia in under 1500 words (and some of them true). A thoroughly depressing state of affairs for any postgraduate attempting to enter the profession. But take heart – you only need one job, and once you've got it, it's better than working for a living.

The PALA Committee

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