

PARLANCE

Newsletter for the Poetics and Linguistics Association

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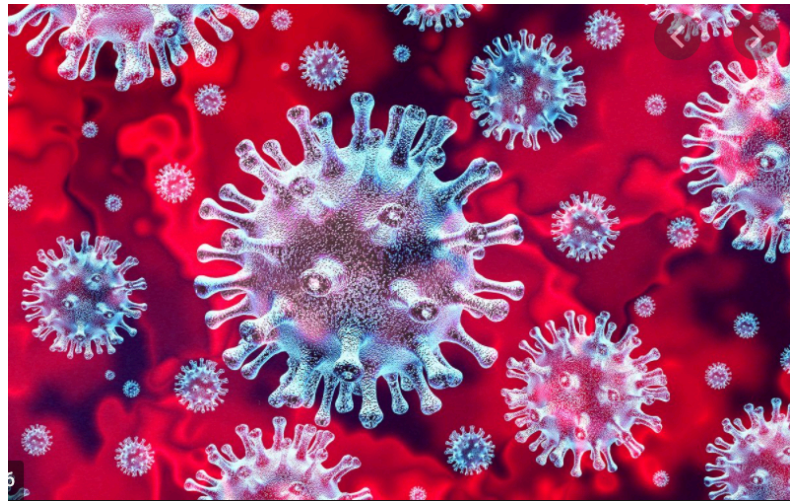
What a waste of 'Aix' puns. Welcome to your no-conference in France.

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PALA in the age of a pandemic

The shape of things to come

This edition of the newsletter is coming to you from a socially-distanced, mask-wearing, shielding editor in the Netherlands. Well, we didn't see this one coming. Or did we? Covid-19 is like a storyline from one of the horror movies that Wesam El-Sayed, one of this edition's contributors, recommends we all get acquainted with to pass the time in lockdown (pp. 20–21). Or it's straight out of a dystopian novel where the text-worlds and discourse-worlds converge to create covid-worlds. Michael Burke thinks it's a conspiracy over the number 19 (pp.13–15). Whatever you think of it, Covid-19 has changed everything. I'm writing this on the 18th July when we should have been together at Aix in France at our yearly PALA conference. I would have been scouring the scene

for newsletter-worthy material, PALA newbies would have been nervously stepping into uncharted waters, the publishers would have been setting up a world of books and ideas and chasing some of us for those elusive chapters (*sorry Adam and Cathy - Ed.*), and the PALA pub would have certainly been established before we even unpacked our conference shoes. But not this year. This year, everything has changed. Now that we live in a world where shaking hands is taboo and just being with someone in person is about as risky as cosying up to a boa constrictor who's spent too long on the Atkins diet, we have had to radically modify how we do things. To give you a sense of just what has changed and how quickly you only have to look at the language. Corona is the new pre-modifier. Allow me to introduce you to a whole range of new concepts. We have, in no particular order:

Corona-conferencing: This is where you feel ambivalent about life as a delegate. On the one hand, you can attend so many conferences you never thought possible in real life: Australia, Nigeria, oh so many. And all without having to sell a kidney to get there. You can even join the Zoom audience incognito so no need to brush your your hair. Bring it on. On the other hand, you just don't get the same experience of being in front of each other, chatting, laughing, getting to know each other. For those of you who have only seen me online, I'm actually 5 foot 8 in real life.

Corona-courses: The dreaded Zoom-teaching. This is where you attempt to reach 28 students online, 75% of whom you cannot see, 35% of whom are still in bed, and 98% of whom are wearing pyjamas from the waist down. And the most frequent utterance you will produce is 'you're muted'.

Covid-secure: This is where you vow to go only to establishments that hose you down with bleach and a wire brush before entering, make you wear surgical balaclavas, and submit you to a full medical before handing you everything you came for on a 6-foot barge pole that's wearing a mask.

Covidiots: These are people who believe that thanks to their personal aura of immunity and the alignment of the stars, are protected from Covid-19. They will scoff at face masks and their wearers, they will shout 'a pox

more in this issue

PALA newbies

This time, Sara Bartl shows us what it's like to be at your first PALA conference and some bloke called Toolan recalls his own newbie experience

PALA stalwarts (*no, not 'oldies' Ed.*)

We hear from Katie Wales, Mick Short, and Michael Toolan. No... wait.. Also Michael Burke shares his past PALA chair experiences in times of yore. Yore is a very long time ago.

PALA sponsored events

Remember those? Lieven Vandelanotte jogs your memory as far as September 2019 back when we kept track of the days of the week and spent time in the same room together.

PALA minutes

You can find the minutes of our recent PALA (Zoom) meeting on the website at www.pala.ac.uk.

PALAver

Our resident mystery illustrator shares the dreaded Zoom experience through the medium of art. Or what passes for art. If you aren't wearing your glasses.

on your 2m distancing rule', and will claim that they'll not succumb to Covid-19 because they've had Covid-18 and it wasn't so bad as all that.

Corona-times: The name of every scholarly university newsletter since March 2020.

Covid cardigan: What you wear 99% of the time when your pyjamas need a wash.

Quarantini: How you celebrate after a long working week. Nothing like putting your feet up, sitting in the garden (or hammock - Michael Burke's last meeting with me on Zoom was from his hammock. Ed.) and sipping an ice-cold Quarantini in the company of.. well.. no-one.

Quarantunes: What you compose when you have time to be alone and are musically gifted. Thanks to Joanna Gavins' and Peter Stockwell's daughter, Ada, for that one.

Verbs are not immune. We have 'mask up' in the US (see below) which you probably won't need to do if you are 'Zooming' (*this is what teaching used to be called - Ed.*).



USA, The Economist, photo from Reuters

But of course, not everyone knows how to wear their mask as Asangba Reginald Taluah from Cologne shows us in a huge chunk of this edition (pp. 23–32). But Katie Wales has hers all sorted (check out PALAver, our illustrator's piece at the end). Zoom in itself has spawned a host of new imperatives: 'UNMUTE!' is now common parlance. Or the indirect declarative 'you're muted' which, for the purposes of saving face flouts the maxim of manner (in place of the more on-record interrogative 'will you for goodness sake unmute yourself?'). It also introduced a new game called Laptop Fail, which I understand Peter Stockwell is fond of playing. Our university in Utrecht is doing 'hyflex' teaching (don't ask), and our emails are littered with Zoom login codes and passwords.



Alliteration has also got in on the act and the governmental slogans in the UK have gone all out on the sibilance with 'Stay home, Protect the NHS, Save lives'. In the US, too, the message is similar: 'Stay healthy, stop Covid-19, Mask up'. In the UK there has been a weekly 'Clap for carers'. This is where you violate the 'stay at home' message in order to go outside with every other person in your street and clap together in appreciation of the health workers who are begging you to stay inside.

The new message from the UK is now 'stay alert, control the virus, save lives' which keeps the grammatical parallelism of its predecessor to say nothing of agency. And far from being told to stay inside, people in the UK are now being encouraged to go *outside* - particularly to restaurants and pubs - to save the economy. 'Eat out to help out' is a government discount voucher scheme (you get money off your meals at participating restaurants if you're brave enough to visit in August) to 'help boost demand, and therefore make jobs more stable and give businesses the confidence they need to reopen' (Conservative Party website). It's all very confusing. But I'm just sitting here waiting on my next Zoom meeting and turning all my book spines around the right way to incite a bit of bookcase-envy. I just need to remove Madonna's biography first. I have to go now, but we can carry on this discussion in the next newsletter or maybe write our own government slogans. Goodness knows what will come next. But if you want me I'll see you on Teams (or is it Zoom??) at 15:00 later. Don't forget to unmute.



Welcome from the PALA Chair

Dr Marina Lambrou

Dear PALAns

Welcome to the second edition of PARLANCE under the helm of Patricia, who has produced yet another bumper newsletter (if the download time is anything to go by).

Little did we know when the first edition was emailed to members in early February what lay ahead for us all this year. Who could have predicted a terrible pandemic that would disrupt our lives so significantly that our emergence from it is being described as the 'new normal'? In February's newsletter, I looked to the summer and cheerfully wrote 'we will be celebrating PALAs 40th anniversary in



2020 in Aix-en Provence (- yes, in Europe!) on the theme of Style and Sense(s). I know that Linda and Sandrine are organising a special (social) event to mark this occasion and with our Founding members attending, we will be able to celebrate together.' I think many of us noted the 15th July, which should have been the start of PALA 2020. PALA Aix was disarranged (what is told but does not happen) and I conjured up lots of counterfactual *what ifs* imagining what should be happening had the conference taken place (e.g. I'd be opening the conference and welcoming everyone...we'd be together enjoying the conference dinner right now...). I am grateful then that Linda and Sandrine will be hosting PALA in Aix-en-Provence in 2021 and also thank the hosts of the University of Sheffield for agreeing to postpone their conference to the year after in 2022.

Despite the need for social distancing and other limitations on activities imposed by Covid, the PALA Committee continued to meet regularly (thank you Zoom) and be in constant contact to ensure that the PALA community continued to thrive – no matter what.



Lockdown also presented us with other challenges as we worked from home but also gave us the time and space to undertake activities we previously never seemed to have enough time for, like reading for pleasure. I silenced my 'if I have time for hobbies then I have time to write!' inner voice and attempted a 1000-piece

Moomin jigsaw (completed in under two weeks. Perhaps there was less reading than I remember.)

The world was also shaken and united by another significant event - the Black Lives Matter movement that prompted action, change and debate in a time of reflection. This is only the start and we can only go forwards.

Onwards! Keep well and see you in Aix!

Marina Lambrou

Covid-related heroism: how to organise PALA not once but twice!

Sandrine Sorlin and Linda Pilliere



Sandrine Sorlin

Dear PALAns,

At this precise time of the year, you should have been appreciating a style and senses conference, at the unmissable annual PALA family reunion in Aix-en-Provence. You should have been catching up with international stylisticians (who you maybe only get to see once a year) over a freshly chilled glass of rosé, you should have been welcoming PALA newbies who, having once caught the PALA bug, will never ever miss a single conference again. For stylistics is indeed contagious. Unlike the harmful Covid-19 that has led to 'social distancing' and made us lose all senses (especially taste) – you will have spotted the irony in the choice of topic for this year's conference on 'senses' – stylistics harmlessly spreads through the veins, inevitably bringing stylisticians together (exploring style correlates well with wine-tasting, mind you). Good news! Stylistics will still be viral next July (or at any other time, come to that) and you will once again be able to enjoy full socialising around a rich diversity of stylistic topics and approaches, enjoying the sensuous tastes of the wine and olive oil tour that was initially planned for this year, breathing in the heady scent of the lavender fields, maybe even taking a dip in the beautiful Riviera.

We guarantee that this postponement of the celebration of the 40th edition of PALA to 2021 will be worth the wait.



Linda Pilliere

PALA newbies

Sara Bartl
(Birmingham, UK)

All Things Being (Un)Equal

Blame it on what you will: a systematic issue of imposter syndrome fostered by years of sky high expectations and a culture that validates the over-sharing of successes or just individual insecurities: many people struggle to speak up at conferences, to take the floor in a room full of people who know an awful lot about whatever is being talked about. It's scary. It's especially gut wrenchingly terrifying when you're that MA or even BA student who's attending their first or second conference.



I don't think I asked a single question at PALA last year and that is despite finding myself in an incredibly welcoming environment. Of course I had questions. I scribbled them down diligently while trying to follow the what was being said in front of me. It was a mess. Mostly, I thought of the more interesting ones hours later.

The biggest advantage of the Corpora and Discourse online conference was that talks were pre-recorded and made available 24 hours in advance. This meant that you could pause the video to note down a question, to spend more time looking at a huge data table or just to process what you just heard. And the questions that suddenly popped up in that odd fugue state before falling asleep could still be asked the next day, when the plenary discussion would happen live, via zoom. What was equally amazing, for me personally, was that questions could be posted online in a comments section on the page of the pre-recorded talks. Some speakers would then reply in lengthy comments; others would get picked up during the discussion. Additionally, questions could be fielded in the zoom call itself. The fact that questions were posed in a panel consisting of all speakers in one session meant, that a great number of them were answered by multiple speakers, from multiple perspectives. Unsurprisingly, methodological intricacies or data related dilemmas have been faced (and dealt with differently) by many of them. What arose were stimulating discussions that profited tremendously from the panel setup.

In many ways, online conferencing was more accessible, not just because the threshold for participation felt lower. My dissertation supervisor had told me about the conference a few days before it took place. Had it been a 'normal', face-to-face conference, this would have been far too late. Arrangements would have had to be made months in advance in order to find affordable accommodation and transport, let alone apply for funding (which, without giving a paper, I would have probably not gotten and which, even if I had, I would have received only after having paid for everything out of pocket first, before getting re-imbursed).

The advantages of online events, maybe in particular for students and early-career researchers, are numerous and some of them, like organising panel discussions instead of individual Q&As after each paper and an option of handing in questions, could be implemented in face-to-face conferences. As someone who at times dreads social interaction, it is tempting to trade those awkward lunch-break moments of being unable to engage in the most basic human activity such as eating because of having miscalculated the ratio between number of hands and number of buffet items for the comfort of sitting in your own room. But online conferencing also robs you of that exhilarating moment when you plunge into the deep end and don't make a fool of yourself. Of that unexpected pat on the back from someone whose work you had only admired from afar up until then. The bliss of being asked a fascinating question about your paper by a stranger while you queue for a sandwich. Because at an online conference, you just don't get the chance to go to that dinner, where suddenly you realize that everybody at the table really is just a person, and (far more often than not) a kind one too.

PALA not-so-newbies

Michael Toolan

As a nearly-finished doctoral student of stylistics at Oxford, I am delighted to send this report on my experience of the recent (April 1981) 'poetics and linguistics' conference at the University of East Anglia, the first academic conference I have attended. Held in a couple of seminar rooms in the School of English and American Studies at UEA, it ran from Friday to Sunday. Several UEA academics were in charge of things but chief of these was my stylistics 'hero', Roger Fowler. I have a bit of history with Fowler: a few months back he examined my D Phil on Faulkner's language and tasked me with doing some revisions to it, now completed. (I had referred to Bakhtin, without making him central to the thesis: Fowler thought I should use Bakhtin much more, or not use him at all. As my supervisor and I summarized this, either I Bakhtin or backed out.) Professor Fowler was an enterprising and efficient organiser of this small gathering (maybe 40 of us, all told?), but seemed a bit withdrawn. Apparently he is being increasingly sucked into university administration and probably foresees grim times ahead, with Mrs Thatcher's

government clearly intent on squeezing the funds available for higher education, and especially for those disciplines that breed unproductive troublemakers.

Besides Fowler, other 'stars' present included Michael 'Paddy' O'Toole (an expert on the Russian and Czech formalists, reportedly soon to be moving to Australia), Philip Brockbank (an engaging Lit prof at York who ran a lively hands-on workshop on reader responses to texts on what I think was the Sunday morning felt like a substitute for church), and Bill Downes of Sociolinguistics fame at UEA. I'm sorry, it was only a month or so ago, my memories should be clearer...

Now I remember chatting to Bob Hodge, one of Fowler's co-authors of *Language and Control*, so maybe Gunther Kress was there too? A visiting student who presented, doc or post-doc I wasn't sure, was someone called Paul

Thibault, bringing the good news of Hallidayan social semiotics from Sydney to Norwich. And Peter Verdonk was there too, from Amsterdam, adding an international gloss to our fenland forum. Very possibly Mick Short attended (and others Lancaster-connected?), maybe Ron Carter, Mike Stubbs, but I don't recall registering their presence. Other participants may have been aware (I was not) that Ron's edited collection of stylistics articles, and Mick's and Geoff Leech's *Style in Fiction* would soon be published, to appear, to huge effect. Although the gathering was small, it wasn't easy to mingle and chat informally with some of the luminaries while others like Paddy O'Toole were charming and highly approachable. But the person I connected with most, found most congenial and like-minded, was a Nottingham Ph. D. student who is as hairy and handsome as myself and even younger; his name is Paul Simpson and his thesis is on whacky Flann O'Brien, a writer just as stylistically eccentric as Faulkner.

There was a good number of school or college teachers attending, mostly female, while all those giving papers or workshops were male... at least, I don't remember Katie Wales, Vimala Herman, Deirdre Burton, Anne Cluysenaar etc. being there. The teachers were fun to hang out with in the brutalist breeze-block student hall of residence; the academics, some of whom wore a jacket and tie, were less approachable. In the old wrestle between Apollo and Dionysius familiar to more experienced humanities conference-goers, Apollo had the upper hand at this particular



gathering. Morning coffee was of the damp-teaspoon-in-caterer's-tin-of-Nescafe variety, there was no particular pub or bar where people gathered for evenings of banter and critique as far as I was aware, no carnivalesque conference dinner with silly games and sketches, and no post-conference day-cruise around the Norfolk Broads. Maybe things like that will emerge later, when this group knows each other better and is more confident about its fellowship, more sure of mutual respect and affection. Just a suggestion.

Perhaps if I look back at this in forty years' time I'll think my god, how very English (not even British/UK, notwithstanding the presence of Peter V and Paul S), how very white and male the presenters all were, and how white and male most of the authors discussed were (Fowles, Larkin, Peake, Auden, Dickens, Lawrence...). But here in the spring of 1981 I am too self-interested to be worrying about race and gender. What I am mostly feeling is delight at finding an emerging academic group interested in the same intellectual questions as me and similarly unconvinced that stylistics is a dead-end, a Fish-busted flush, a squib irredeemably dampened — doused — by deconstructionism. The group is a loose constellation, admittedly, with diverse thinkers underpinning their work: Searle, Grice, Lakoff, Halliday, Bakhtin, Mukarovsky, Labov, Malinowski, Peirce, etc. That diversity isn't too troubling, in fact it's exciting for me at this stage, starting out: thirteen ways of looking at a text, as it were; or a reader. It's been heartening and reassuring to find these academics, enough of a group to set up a conference, small in number, but quite possibly a critical mass, committed to systematic analysis of the language of literature. Like-minded, and friendly, that was the best thing about the Norwich meeting; people on my wavelength. And since they have found a place for themselves somewhere in British academia maybe I can too eventually, despite the Thatcher cuts that are making new university jobs scarce. Perhaps I shouldn't switch to the law yet. Things may work out.

June 1981, Michael Toolan

Katie Wales

Thinking back to the early PARLANCE days....

I was membership secretary of PALA at the time, so I had access to the database of members. I remember feeling that PALAns might like to keep in touch with each other between conferences, and provide details of relevant up-coming conferences, etc and also publications and promotions. The title I chose, obviously a pun, put paid to the alternative pronunciation of PALA that one or two members were using, namely 'paler'. Contrary to urban myth, it was not produced on the old-fashioned type-writer, despite being 40 years ago: it was produced on a BBC word-processor! I photocopied it in my department. Some time later PARLANCE became the title of our in-house journal, edited by Mick Short at first, I think, publishing very interesting work of our members that would later be published more widely, or that was a conference

paper. It was this that gave us the idea of launching a 'proper' journal, with Longmans, 'Language and Literature', mainly because there was nothing in the UK for stylistics, only the USA really.

Of course nowadays PALA members keep in touch with each other by email, through the useful service of the PALA publicity office, which tells us about forthcoming events, etc. But it is nice to have a Newsletter as well, with its lively reports in particular of the PALA conference, and new members' reactions.

My First PALAs

Mick Short

A pervasive feature of Parlang for some time now has been the 'My First PALA' piece, where someone 'new to the trade', often a postgraduate student, gives their impressions of what it was like to experience a PALA conference for the first time. Common themes emerge: newcomers often come to our conferences with considerable trepidation, worried about if they will be criticised and how they will cope; they are then surprised how friendly the other conferees are, often comparing the PALA experience favourably with other conferences they have attended; they are surprised that 'the great and the good' in PALA are so approachable and really do want to help; if they are giving their first paper they are dreading being shot down in flames; they instead discover that most conferees ask helpful questions and make supportive suggestions; and they are surprised to learn that conferences don't have to be a series of trials by combat and can be entertaining and fun.

Now that PALA is some 40 years old, I have been comparing those impressions with my (now very imperfect, I have to say) memory of the early conferences, to help to understand how PALA conferences came to have their special feel.

The first PALA conference was in Nottingham in 1980 and it must be difficult to imagine now what the state of stylistics was back in the late 1970s. It consisted mainly of a handful of books and a small set of widely spread journal papers and book chapters. These works were mainly early attempts at the analysis of poetry, or general discussions of language and literature and whether linguistics had anything at all to offer to the discussion of literary works. The linguistics available for use in text analysis consisted mainly of phonetics and grammar. Discourse analysis



Mick and Hilary celebrating their Golden Wedding anniversary in July 2020. Check out those hats.

and pragmatics and had not yet been properly developed, and so the analysis of prose or drama was more or less unexplored, pace Fowler's (1977) *Linguistics and the Novel*. Stylistics seemed to be regarded by both linguists and literary critics as the sort of activity that should only be practised privately, among consenting adults (cf. the infamous early 'debate' between F. W. Bateson and Roger Fowler, reprinted in Fowler's *The Languages of Literature* [RKP, 1971]).

So, when we organised our first conferences we were effectively making it all up as we went along. Most of us were young academics, often trying to complete PhD theses while teaching full time, with a supervisor and no effective systems of support. I can remember when I met my supervisor for the first time, being told to go away for 6 months and 'bone up' on my chosen subject area. Research work was an even more lonely occupation then than it is now. There were very few other postgraduate students in our departments and almost certainly no-one with the same academic interests. So we felt even more exposed than research students today.

Hence, when we came together we were very much trying to work out what to do and where to go. And this, I think, is where the supportive facet of PALA began to grow. We were all delighted to find that there really were a few other people out there who wanted to develop this strange new area of stylistics. We had found our academic friends! We were all exposed in our different contexts and different ways and so always wanted to ask open and supportive questions, to help each other develop our own little community of scholars. We've never felt grand or great because we never have been, and we have tried to be the supervisors we longed for ever since.

The first conferences were much smaller than PALA conferences are now, of course, with maybe 20 or 25 participants. There was very little money to support academic travel and so all the early conferences were in England and 'as cheap as chips' to attend. We purposely kept conference fees very small and we all stayed in cheap study-bedroom accommodation. The small cohort of conferees meant that everyone heard all the papers presented, and discussions of common themes and issues could range across the whole weekend. This is something I miss in our modern conferences, and is one of the reasons why the smaller one-day symposiums were developed.

Finally, because the other conferees quickly became our friends, we soon established the 'PALA pub' tradition and everyone was also up for the early introduction, led by Katie Wales and myself (we've always been a bit of a wacky duo!), of songs, sketches and other fun things in the evenings. This led to the after-conference-dinner entertainments which have become a more or less established feature of the PALA conferences. There have been some wonderfully silly evenings. For me, the crowning glory of the entertainments was the Noh Theatre version of *Gone with the Wind* at Kansai Gaidai University in Osaka in 2007. Long may the PALA conference, its entertainments and special supportive character continue.

Mick Short

University of Lancaster

Notes from a former PALA chair (with lockdown hair - and a self-isolation beard)

Michael Burke

University College Roosevelt (UU)

Netherlands

Hello everyone. I was hoping to see you all again in Aix-en-Provence this summer, but up popped a Covid virus with the number 19 and our plans were scuppered. Au revoir bouillabaisse, goodbye salade Niçoise and sayonara *pain au chocolat*. I was also hoping to get a little bit of 'oenotourisme' in while I was in Aix, in between the sessions and papers: you know, "visites de caves à vin de Provence" and all that. Ah well ... tasting the best rosé in the world sur place (in situ) will just have to wait another year.

The number 19 should never have been prevalent in this year anyhow. This is 2020; the year of excellent vision. If only Covid 19 had been closer than 20 feet, we might have spotted it earlier and acted to stop it on time. 19 is a trivial number really, ... OK, we had a fantastic PALA conference last year in Liverpool in 2019, but apart from that it seems somehow a non-descript number. But give it a moment; if you try to stand in the shoes of the nerdiest person you know (for me, that is my good friend and celebrated corpus linguistic, Martin Wynne, of Oxford Text Archive infamy), then you can come up with all kinds of tedious particulars. For one, 19 is a prime number. Second, the game of 'Go' is played on 19x19 grid. Third, in the 1980s Paul Hardcastle had a hit with the song '19' about how the average age for US soldiers killed in the Vietnam War was 19 (they don't write cheery songs like that anymore) ... And for those of you far too young to remember the 1980s, the singer Adele's 2008 debut album was called 19. Fourth, and I have just received this information in a WhatsApp message from Martin, "19 years is apparently very close to 235 lunations". Thanks for that Martin, fascinating stuff, we can all sleep soundly now. A last example is that I am considering taking up golf in my ensuing dotage and I have already learned that the 19th hole is another name for the clubhouse (where wines, beer and spirits are served) ... and so we are neatly back to PALA. Of course, Covid 19 is called Covid 19 because it started in the year 2019 ... allegedly.



Micky B with his Rosé

Anyhow, I digress ... Patricia Canning, in her role as Parlance editor, asked me to write a piece about my time as PALA chair ten years ago. I wasn't sure. You see, 2009, the year I was elected, is a long time ago, especially if you count the years in units of wine. So Little P (*don't anyone ever call me this. Ed.*) and I had a Zoom call recently, and I was persuaded by her to do so. I should add at this juncture that the unsettling vision of her lockdown hair had nothing to do with it, mine was even worse, apparently (*it's ok Michael, I've since trimmed my beard. Ed.*).

So, here we go I had the honour and privilege to serve as the chair of PALA from 2010-2012: I had previously been the PALA membership secretary for three years. The PALA Chairs before me had been magnificent (and those who were to come after me were equally outstanding, I might add). The annual conferences in my stint were held in Italy, Namibia and Malta. These are all stunning locations filled with kind and welcoming people. All three conferences were meticulously planned and organised, so my role was minimalist ... so thank you again John, Elisabetta and Daniela for Genoa; thank you Sarala for Windhoek and thank you Odette for Valetta. I remember many great presentations and papers at those three conferences, but it is also the social side at PALA that stays with you. If you were there, who could forget our 'gelato tour of the Cinque Terre' or dining out on delicious worms and grubs in one of the best restaurants in Windhoek or traveling around the beautiful island of Malta on a sea so choppy that I still get nauseous when I think about it.

When I started as PALA Chair I went into it with a kind of JFK attitude of 'don't ask what PALA can do for me, ask what I can do for PALA'. In the years previously, I had organised a stylistics summer school for students in my home town of Middelburg in the Netherlands where my college, UCR, is located. These were my own students, but I brought in PALA colleagues, in pairs, to teach them for a week. One year, we had the partnership of Dan McIntyre and Beatrix Busse, another year we had the Paul Simpson / Michael Toolan combo, etc. I started to think ... could we not tag such a student summer school onto the beginning of the annual PALA conference for a few days and open it up for all students? ... And so was born 'the PALA summer school', which has now evolved and is open to everyone, not just students. It is still going strong ten years later and colleagues regularly give up their free time, unpaid, to teach to fellow Palans in their field of expertise. If students and colleagues have learned new stylistics tools and methodologies, as a participant in such a workshop in the last ten years, that has empowered them to go on to excel in their own universities and in their own research careers, then I am satisfied. My old PhD supervisor, and very good friend, Peter Verdonk, would always say "PALA is all about people helping each other". How very true, Peter. So, I don't see the PALA summer school as my 'legacy', whatever that means, if anything, I see it as a useful communal heirloom, and one that is devoid of any real monetary value. Long may it continue!

OK. Time to stop writing and send this to Patricia before the submission deadline expires. It is 16 July today, the day the PALA 2020 Aix-en-Provence conference was supposed to have started. In this sense, it is a very sad day. However, after I have pressed the 'send' button, I will be off to the barbers to say 'au revoir' to this lockdown hair and beard and when I get back home Helle and I will sit in our back garden in the sun, crack open a bottle of the excellent Les Murgers Rosé Coteaux d'Aix en Provence (I have bought a case of six bottles, one for each day of PALA 2020) and raise a glass to PALA and all her Palans; past, present and future. One could never meet a better bunch of people.

Stay safe everyone and see you all en France in 2021 with our current excellent chair, Marina Lambrou, and our conference hosts, Linda and Sandrine.

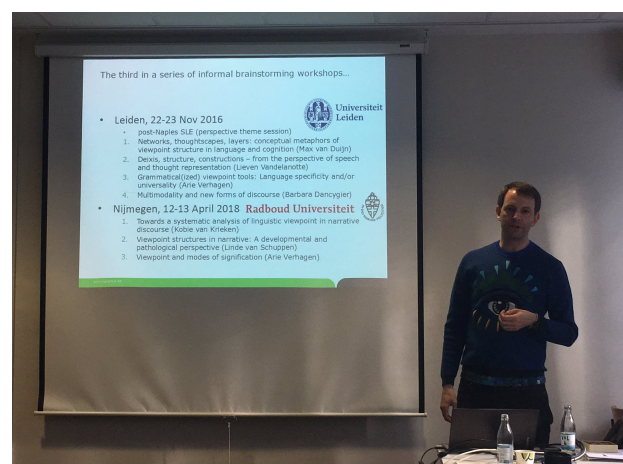
PALA sponsored event

There's not much going on right now because, well, the pandemic, and so we bring you one recent event hosted by Lieven Vandelanotte in Belgium in September 2019 before everything changed.

“Reviewing viewpoint” workshop, Namur (Belgium), 19-20 September 2019
Lieven Vandelanotte



Following on from previous editions held in Leiden (November 2016) and Nijmegen (April 2018), the University of Namur (in the capital of the French-speaking part of Belgium) was pleased to host a third edition in an ongoing informal series of brainstorming workshops devoted to viewpoint. The event was sponsored by the FNRS research foundation,



the Namur Institute of Language, Text and Transmediality (NaLTT), the University of Namur's Research Council, and PALA.

The format of these workshops purposely avoided the rhythm of short presentations with shorter discussion time in quick succession, constant clock-checking and time-policing. Instead, there were, for the Namur edition, four three-hour time slots of mixed presentations/discussion time, with lead presentations focusing on four broadly defined topics:

Redefining viewpoint in a crowded field

Barbara Dancygier (University of British Columbia) & Lieven Vandelanotte (University of Namur & KU Leuven)

Revisiting viewpoints across narrative and persuasive genres

Kobie van Krieken (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Renewing viewpoint research across expressive modalities

Terry Janzen (University of Manitoba) focusing on sign language

Irene Mittelberg (RWTH Aachen University) focusing on co-speech embodiment

Researching the viewpoint aspects of figurative language and image use

Geert Brône (KU Leuven) focusing on irony and multimodal viewpoint

Barbara Dancygier & Adrian Lou (University of British Columbia) focusing on viewpoint and image schemas in online discourse



Barbara Dancygier (University of British Columbia)

In addition to these lead presentations and the discussions and exchanges they prompted, we reserved some time in the Thursday sessions for brief reviews of recent collaborative editing projects, or updates on ongoing such projects, involving workshop participants as editors. This provided an opportunity for participants who had not yet seen some of this work to be introduced to it, and also for the editors concerned to reflect on take-home points, uptake or lack thereof, future perspectives and the like.

On the eve of the workshop, a guest lecture on simile in text and image was organized featuring Barbara Dancygier, Adrian Lou and Lieven Vandelanotte as speakers, for a mixed audience of undergraduate students, colleagues in the Namur department, and workshop participants.

To date these workshops have emerged and been run very informally, and in that spirit no firm plans for future editions have been made, though the possibility of a future edition, whether returning to Leiden or moving to Leuven, was mooted. To be continued...!

For more details about the workshop (and the collaborative editing projects that were discussed there), please go to the workshop website at viewpoint.unamur.be

How colonial is your curriculum?

The killing of George Floyd in the US state of Minneapolis on 25th May 2020 sparked a resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement through a wave of protests against police brutality of people of colour. In a matter of days, monuments honouring key historical figures were torn down for their glorification of slavery, amongst other things, as the narrative of 'otherness' and imperial superiority promulgated throughout history was brought to the fore. People began to look at their own behaviour and asked 'am I complicit in perpetuating this narrative?' As educators, it is our responsibility to ensure that history tells more than one story. Esterino Adami from the University of Turin shares his thoughts on how academics can help interrogate and deconstruct colonial narratives.

Esterino Adami

University of Turin, Italy

Along with the devastating covid crisis, this year has given the entire world much food for thought, in particular in connection with issues such as civil rights, ethnic belonging and globalised identity. The emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, the killing of George



Floyd and the defacing or toppling of statues dedicated to controversial figures are just a handful of the manifestations of this new social and cultural climate, which aims at discussing and deconstructing important discourses and themes. Inevitably this impacts on the academic world too, and, as professionals who work in the educational field, it is morally imperative for all of us to raise awareness about these pervasive ideological forces for our students, which otherwise would remain unnoticed however rooted they are in the interstices of society.

As stylistics teaches us, texts do have the power to transmit and naturalise certain worldviews: for example in endorsing hegemonic positions, they can silence or at least mitigate the destructive effects of colonialism, but they can also justify historical events, or perpetuate racist or discriminatory values. The study of language and literature generates many benefits, and certainly allows us to critically look at our past, in an effort not to obliterate what once happened, but rather try to understand that and hopefully improve our civil conscience in order to live peacefully, guarantee respect and acknowledge diversity, which ultimately is the key to human civilisation.

But do the texts and materials of our syllabi really influence students? Yes, they do because they may support or propagate complex and entangled ideas, and as such they are potentially very influential for new generations. Thus, we need to reflect on the topics we deal with in class and see how the reading materials we use may be revised or analysed from different perspectives. This does not mean that we have to 'get rid of the canon' and abolish traditional subjects or authors, from Dante's *Inferno* and Dickens' Fagin to Kiplingian non-western characters: on the contrary, it is important to keep texts that are fundamental for a particular field or discipline, and juxtapose them with other works, with the goal to broaden the discussion and examine subtle aspects with a new sensibility. As an example, let's briefly think about the multitude of literary and non-literary texts that accompanied the birth and expansion of the European imperial powers in the 1800s: very often, these contain traces of the dominant ideologies of their epoch and a linguistic analysis can certainly contribute to the deconstruction of history. Language, as we all know, is the very first tool by which ideas and beliefs are projected and therefore it can promulgate a sense of marginalisation, inferiority and otherness. Of course language operates not only in the literary field, but embraces all human experience. Today, a colonial mindset can still regard the presence of Afro-American actors in public domains such as TV series and commercials as the exception rather than the rule. Indeed, it can also be seen in the process of naming, such as when streets and squares bear the names of controversial, or even racist figures of the past. If history and culture are a sort of palimpsest on which things are written and rewritten, perhaps then we should develop a way to decipher the signs of the past, since memory sometimes can fail us, and things and events that appear rather neutral on the surface, in reality, may stem from narratives of annihilation and intolerance. From this angle, a series of different materials and frameworks can help our students handle sensitive issues and perhaps

understand challenging aspects of the world we live in, from global migrations to the exploitation of minority communities.

Talking about my personal experience, as far as my teaching (and researching) are concerned, I can say that I am glad that my courses are part of two degree programmes in Asian and African Studies, offered at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (University of Turin). Since the focus of our degrees is on languages and cultures 'other' (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, or Hindi), it becomes natural for me to include in my courses on stylistics and sociolinguistics both fictional and non-fictional texts that relate to the postcolonial world. Therefore, my reading list is varied, covers a range of genres and includes materials to analyse texts such as a novel written by a Canadian-Japanese author or by a Chinese-English novelist, a part of an essay by Chinua Achebe on the power of English, an excerpt from a graphic novel on the Partition of India or from a political speech by Nelson Mandela. To some extent, in my classes I also try to combine language studies and postcolonial critique by adopting and adapting various theories and approaches. Language is of paramount importance in the postcolonial arena too, as Shakespeare's Caliban points out with his bitter words, read through (asymmetrical) power relations that still hold true today. The language that text-producers in fact employ determines to a large extent how we see things, but what kind of connotations and echoes do texts trigger? Typically they define cultural difference through hyperbolic terms, perhaps suggesting tones of threat, distance and subservience. And if we're not careful with words, in the end we somehow endorse terms and expressions that apparently are 'innocent', but which in reality are not as they derive from, and often still underline, dense periods of subjugation and sufferance. Politically correct language has tried –often successfully- to replace ideological or discriminatory lexis, but maybe we should look for a balance in our linguistic apparatus, and not simply shift from one extreme to another.

It is my hope that the range of methods and texts (both traditional and recent) that I use with my students will not only allow them to consider a plurality of cultural contexts, rhetorical styles and thematic contents, but will also enable them to go beyond reductive binaries such as the 'west' and the 'east', and see how (hi)stories are produced, appropriated and abrogated. It is high time we came to terms with toxic histories of imperial conquest and made an effort to imagine (and build) a better world.

Life in Lockdown

*Wesam El-Sayed,
Minia University, Egypt*

This lockdown has more silver linings for me than I expected. I'm currently working on my PhD in cognitive stylistics and horror fiction, and it was a good opportunity to get back on track, study-wise. I'm still a teaching assistant (TA), so I'm not in charge of any courses. But I have a deep connection with my students (who are seniors), and I felt responsible for helping them get over this thing, especially because here in Egypt the ministry took the decision of postponing their graduation until the lockdown is lifted, which was hard on them. I tried to be there for them whenever possible. I even arranged for an informal Zoom meeting to just chat and say hi and let them say whatever's on their minds. It was nice to see their happy faces.



Wesam El-Sayed looking not very frightened at all

As an avid horror movie fan(atic), this whole 'lockdown-pandemic-quarantine' thing hit me differently. It was surprising to see an eco-Lovercraftian nightmare (as I like to term this whole thing) come true. It was baffling for a bit because things escalated quite quickly, but I believe I was lucky (in a manner of speaking) to have a (fictional) image schema, and a script for a pandemic, but still, the world-switch from fictional to factual was still a bit hard. However, the catharsis I feel when watching horror movies gave me a more hopeful view of how this will end (soon, hopefully).

I'm also more of a visual person, so this lockdown helped me increase my movie list. Most notably, I've watched all three seasons of Morgan Freeman's *Story of God*. It was a nice and informative journey for me and I loved how he simply approached some deep philosophical questions and gave you perspectives you didn't even know they existed. There was also a Netflix mini-series called *Unorthodox*. Totally recommend it. It's only 4 episodes, one hour each. It tells the partly true story of Deborah Feldman and her rejection of her Hasidic roots. Learning about other communities and religious groups is beyond interesting for me and watching this series (in spite of the tense subject) was enlightening.

It would be a betrayal for my horror affection not to recommend any horror movies. I have a thing for horror movies shot in the found-footage style. And so, *Creep 1* and *Creep 2* are two movies I'd recommend about a serial killer documenting his murders. Besides the regular spirits-haunting-humans theme, this movie and its sequel offer a new theme for me. You won't regret watching them, IF you're a horror fan of course!

Charles Briffa

Department of Translation, Terminology, and Interpreting Studies, Malta



Charles Briffa with his wife, Angela

During the lockdown period (March-May 2020) because of the COVID-19 pandemic I obeyed the health authorities and remained at home with my wife to stay safe. We had ample time for spring cleaning and I had a holiday from shaving. But social distance meant also not meeting our children and grandchildren, following livestreaming masses on television, and wearing masks when talking to the postman. And the university had closed all its services to students and instructed all its academic and administrative staff to work from home via the web.

Therefore, I had to make more use of the dreaded online functions for delivering learning material, assessment, and feedback to my post-graduate students of Translation through the VLE system (i.e. Virtual Learning Environment). I also became familiar with Zoom because like most of the rest of the world our university switched to online sessions for remote work. I had to use Zoom for distance education (lectures and individual tutorials), assessment (on assignments and in exams), and social meetings (like peer-to-peer chatting and departmental sessions). I said 'dreaded' because sometimes the system failed and we had to start all over again. At the same time I saw myself engulfed in an atmosphere of science fiction and I imagined myself to be a character in some cheap fiction dealing with scientific advances that enhanced human distancing. This was, however, reality.

One day I was (in my study) hosting a meeting on Zoom. It was a viva voce and we were examining an M.A. dissertation of a student. Half way through the viva, I heard my wife in the other room softly playing Louis Armstrong's *What a Wonderful World*. I smiled because I thought my wife was being sarcastic: scornful about the lockdown and sardonic about the Zoom meeting (notice the alliteration of the song's title - WWW). When we ended the Zoom meeting, I looked out of the window overlooking our garden and there, under the orange tree, I saw my wife surrounded by sparrows: she was feeding them pieces of bread. She would throw some pieces to the right of her and the sparrows would dive after them; then she would throw some other pieces to the left and some of the dear creatures would shift to where they fell. I joined her and she said excitedly: "This is lovely! I discovered these new friends yesterday while removing some weeds and I saw them watching me from the top of the tree. And I said to myself: 'How about giving them some crumbs!' And they liked the idea. Look at them." She wasn't being sarcastic, after all. And in my mind two images came: Walt Disney's *Snow White* and Mary Poppins' *Feed the Birds*. My wife had found something beautiful during the pandemic period.

Another positive thing was the lucky escape I had once. In the beginning, before we were advised to stay at home, we were told to wash our hands often, to wear masks when shopping, and to adopt social distancing from other people. And one day I was returning on foot from the radio station after broadcasting my live programme on language. And I was walking on the left pavement, when I noticed a few feet in front of me that there were some workers on this side. They were working on a three-storey house. A huge concrete slab had been lifted to the top and they were watching it from below. To avoid passing through these workers (so as to keep my social distance) I crossed over to the other side and continued walking on the right pavement. As soon as I came parallel to the workers, I saw them suddenly dashing away from the spot and the huge concrete slab come crashing down to the ground. If I had not crossed to the other side to maintain social distancing I would have been involved in this incident.

Like everyone else, my wife and I still hope for better times. But she intends to keep her feathered friends.

Ian Cushing and Cushing Mills, R.M. (2020).

Brunel University, London, UK

We've had quite a few PALA babies over the years and some have even made it to PALA conferences! Life in lockdown means we'll have to postpone introductions to our new arrivals for a bit longer. To keep you going, here's a photo sent in by Ian Cushing who welcomed his first little one into the world on the 18 April, River Moon Cushing Mills, born at 7lbs in St George's Hospital, Tooting, London. Ian tells us that 'lockdown has meant even more time spent together as a three, but we would like it if he could meet his grandparents, one day....'. Hopefully, that day will not be too far away now. The adorable River at 7 weeks looking alert and ready to explore the four walls of his house. That is one cute baby.



Unmasking the Masks in the Wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Asangba Reginald Taluah

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In the very past few months, the world awoke to the devastation of a coronavirus otherwise known as Covid-19 (SARS-CoV-2), which is purported to have evolved in the Wuhan province in China and gradually swept through most nations around the world. Amidst the general fear and panic of Covid-19, many people all over the globe have lost their lives. As the world continues to grieve for the loss of lives

and anticipate quick remedies from the continues efforts made globally by scientists to curtail the menace that has taken the entire world by surprise, diverse measures have been put in place to seek best treatment measures and halt its global spread.

There have been global social-distancing strategies, coupled with lockdowns of towns and countries. Until recently, many people were asked to stay home in order to protect themselves against the coronavirus. As a result, religious, economic and social activities in general came to a halt. These restrictions are however being relaxed in some countries and cities as Covid-19 cases recede.

In the meantime, amongst a host of strategies adopted to curtail the menace, one measure that has since been initiated and remains a very visible and crucial one is the wearing of masks. Many have complained that the wearing of masks causes discomfort in some respects, yet others lay claim to the scarcity of masks and so their lack and their demand has pushed up prices of masks. It should be noted however that some of our Moslem women have been accustomed to covering their faces with their hijabs, also known particularly as hiqabs, which may serve as face masks in most respects.

That notwithstanding, the matter of wearing face masks has not been left to individual choice but mostly mandated by diverse governments globally. Quite apart from the adherence to the use of face masks, one is also entreated not to touch his or her face with the hands as they could be infected with Covid-19. The irony however remains that some persons prefer to hang their face masks on their necks as though the face mask is a fashion accessory whereas others simply leave them in their bags or hold them in their hands awaiting critical times where they may incur sanctions or the displeasure of others before they put them on properly.

Prior to the rise of the Coronavirus pandemic, the use of face masks was mainly restricted to health workers but in the wake of the pandemic however, face masks have become part and parcel of most peoples' dress codes.

Face masks have however become 'fashion' and have attracted designers from all walks of life. Face masks come in different brands, shapes and colours and may be worn with bags, hats, shirts, trousers or general dresses and footwear to match. Face masks as a general concept may include: cloth face masks, surgical face masks, industrial masks, face shields, goggles, respirators and bandanas amongst a host of others.

The use of face masks in recent times may generate sanctions, social-distancing but also belonging. Responses to the wearing of masks range from rather sceptical (on some medical bases) even citing adverse effects, whereas others have wondered how useful these masks may be when if social-distancing measures are being maintained.

It is safe to say that Covid-19 has and is causing fear, panic pain and sorrow but it also stirs other emotions of which humour is no exception. Humour is an important way of getting that emotional break from the grief, fear, anxiety and the general seriousness that has bedevilled the world as a result of Covid-19 and its undesirable concomitants.

Nowhere is this humour more keenly felt than in the deployment of face masks (or 'nose masks'/'mouth masks'/'nose and mouth masks'). The ambiguity of the noun 'face', has been perceived diversely either by intent or ignorance. The compound noun 'face mask' may however subsume the compound nouns nose/mouth masks as the latter body parts are found on the former.

The wearing of masks has also touched the creative sensibilities of artists. Driven by high demand, shortages of medical face masks further propelled the creation of business opportunities to produce them. Improvisations have become the order of the day. Socks, napkins and several other parts of clothing have been reformed into face masks by some. Internet tutorials show us how and what to reform and how to use the respective face masks. As art in most respects is the reflection of reality, face masks have not escaped the attention of some artists. Below is a painting by the artist Abdoul-Ganiou Dermani, which depicts a woman in a face mask with the deductive message "STOP COVID 19" inscribed on the face mask.



Figure 1: By Abdoul-Ganiou Dermani
(University of African Art facebook platform,
13.06.2020)

However, not all who ventured into reforming clothes and other paraphernalia into face masks actually succeeded. The problem remained that some of the self-styled face masks did not meet the requirements set by the health organisations. Nonetheless, on critical situations where these face masks are mandated by law, it was better to pretend to

be wearing a face mask or a faulty face mask for that matter than not having one at all.

It should be reiterated that, not all users of face masks are familiar with their uses and applications. Quite apart from the deliberate actions or ignorance by some persons to their approach and use, the inability for others to afford face mask or attain the right masks as reiterated earlier cannot be overemphasised. Depending on the type and kind of face masks

worn or the manner in which either the appropriate or inappropriate face mask is worn, humour may ensue.

There are those, for instance, who take off their masks in order to sneeze or cough after which they put on their masks again. These acts leave critical onlookers in awe since the essence for which the face masks are worn are defied.

A trawl around the internet's various social platforms yields the following novel means and uses of a face mask. I take no credit in producing the photos, and to trace their primary source would be a task as futile as tracing where the wind comes from or where it is going. Hence, there is no intent of infringing on copyright laws whatsoever. Where the source of data is known, it is duly acknowledged.

Analyses and Interpretations of Face Masks and their Associations

The obligation for individuals to put on face masks once they are outside their homes or at social gatherings in particular has necessitated a series of instructions at various establishments. In figure 2 below, there is a notice that seeks to communicate thus: "NO



Figure 2

NOISE MASK, NO ENTRY", however, the word "Nose" is misspelled as "Noise", thereby making the notice read as "NO NOISE MASK NO ENTRY". Not once, but twice. It is interesting how the error of misspelling is not realised in a notice as vital as this. Fortunately, the message sought to be conveyed cannot be misread to mean another. For instance, had the message

read "NO NOISE, NO ENTRY" a controversial person upon entry may start to shout or make any other unnecessary sounds in an attempt to comply with the notice.

The rush to make an income and also to meet the demand for face masks has also resulted in some people producing face masks beyond the usual imagination. It could be deduced that the creators were so much in rush to produce face masks that they forgot to test their products. Note the face mask in **Figure 3** below; particularly the four ear straps provided. Quite apart from humour created by the mere sight of the face mask, the caption nonetheless exacerbates the humour of the face mask.

Pls I'm looking for the person who sold this nose mask to my friend's mother....which human being has 4 ears? 😬



Figure 3

least a second glance and a critical one indeed of these face masks. Although these face masks cause a stir in some respects, they nonetheless fulfil the purpose for their use.

The man on the left in **Figure 4** is wearing a black oblong face mask supposed to be by the designer NIKE. From all indications, this picture brilliantly showcases that the wearer wants to be in vogue. In a similar vein, the lady in **Figure 5** is wearing a variegated brownish oblong face mask designed in the near fashion of the NIKE face mask in **Figure 4**. Onlookers may well take at



Figure 4

Perhaps due to convenience, some individuals have decided to craft face masks to match their professions or their place of work in particular. Though some of these crafted masks may be presumed to have been done on purpose to create fun, some have been crafted with all seriousness to prevent both the transmission and contraction of Covid-19.



Figure 5

In the pictures that follow, creativity has been let loose. In **Figure 6** for example, the woman selling the roasted corn has employed her leaf wraps with the aid of a couple of ropes to form a tightly held face mask. Here, all parts of her head, including her hair are covered except for her eyes. After all, she needs to see in order to engage in her enterprise successfully. **Figure 6** also has the added benefit of being in disguise. One will only be able to identify the corn seller herein by one's prior knowledge of the identity of the



Figure 6

corn seller.

The elderly man in figure 7 with the broad cabbage leaf as a protective face mask could be presumed to be a farmer, or better still one from the countryside. The mask serves to indicate what vegetables the wearer has at his disposal. As an added bonus, this cabbage-leaf face mask may be classified as a disposable as it can barely be reused. But it can be recycled.



Figure 7

With respect to **Figure 8**, the man in his metallic mask may be presumed to be a fabricator or welder for that matter or one who is generally engaged with metallic craft. More so, the man in **Figure 9** may be said to be one who has the technical knowhow of the gourd or calabash in most respects. As a general note, the diverse creative intuitions of the respective persons discussed herein have been employed in very novel enterprises.



Figure 8



Figure 9

With respect to the following persons in **Figures 10** and **11**, their main aim for putting on their respective face masks is to prevent them from contracting the Covid-19 virus. However, in the absence of the usual face masks, one needs to improvise. The man on the bike had



Figure 10



Figure 11

no other alternative than to employ a bra as a face mask. He also seems very comfortable in his approach with no recourse to onlookers. The elderly woman in **Figure 11** could resort to no other substitute for the usual face mask than to use a leaf. No wonder there is laughter behind them. The face masks generate humour to a great extent, but the ideas of the respective persons are however exaggerated perhaps by intent or ignorance respectively.



Figure 12

Figures 12 and **13** show a woman who has taken 'face mask' rather literally and appeared in a gorilla mask in the foreground and a woman in stylised face mask at the background respectively. As the caption in **Figure 12** rightly suggests, the women in the respective masks did not get the information with regard to the prescribed face masks to use, hence the need for governments to be clearer on this issue. It is not easy to ascertain from the wearer of the

gorilla mask if she actually intends to create laughter or she is indeed serious in her approach as one cannot see any reactions or facial expressions for that matter. Under no circumstance would one see this and not let out a sigh or giggle. Likewise, the woman in the background in **Figure 13** appears well-composed. Perhaps as a result of her ignorance, the man in foreground decides to take a picture of her.

Covid-19 was also thought to be prevented or perhaps eradicated completely by the use of anti-viral agents or pure alcohol as demonstrated by the persons in **Figures 14** and **15** respectively. In **Figure 14**, the woman employed a sachet of liquor, which brand is not clear whereas the woman in **Figure 15** is wearing a compact disk, notably an anti-virus disk for computers. The Coronavirus is said not to survive in alcohol that is not less than 60%. Needless to say, this percentage of alcohol is said by experts to only be effective in hand sanitizers in particular and not as imbibed by some persons as a beverage or whatsoever. What is even more striking is the fact the woman in **Figure 14** is not consuming the alcohol but employing the entire package as a face mask. At least she positions it over her nose.



Figure 13 clear whereas the an anti-virus disk for



Figure 14

One may have thought to have seen it all, however, the surprises with regard to the kinds of face mask, their employment and associations are endless.

Even if the alcohol is **inside** the covering. The woman in **Figure 15** also hopes to delete all the Coronaviruses which she may come into contact with. If only it were that simple.

Figure 15



Figures 16 and **17** stand out in some respects; most importantly being the deliberate attempts by the wearers to create openings on the masks to use their mouths. In **Figure 16**



Figure 16

for example, the motorist will not compromise on riding and smoking simultaneously. His determination has led him to create an opening just enough for the cigarette to get through to his mouth. A critical examination of the hole created in the masks reveals that it was created purposely for cigarettes and none other. **Figure 17** (gospellyricsng.com) presupposes that the lady in the foreground is singing gospel songs at a worship centre. It is common knowledge that

face masks which usually cover the mouth in most instances will tend to obstruct the texture or general quality of the sound created by a speaker. Hence, it is in the best choice of the lady in perspective to create that wide opening in the mask as depicted in the picture above in order to enable her to deliver her songs at her best. As to whether this venture still makes her face mask worthy of the purpose for which it was created is left to the scientists



Figure 17

to decide. Life must still go on. These novelties are nonetheless poignant and tend to create some comic relief.

Conclusion

Interpretative analyses of some pictures depicting the kinds of face masks, their employment and associations in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic have been shared here in order to demonstrate that amidst the pain, sorrow, fear and panic that Covid-19 has created and continues to create, some acts serve to create comic relief in a range of respects. Research has revealed that face masks in particular and other personal protective equipment (PPEs) are becoming an environmental threat as some are not disposed of properly. Others maintain that if and when Covid-19 is eradicated, face masks would remain fashion trends for some considerable time. Another comic truth worth concluding with is

After the **end** of Corona.. you need to wear the mask this way for 2 months

To let your ears come **back** to normal position



Figure 18

illustrated in the picture in **Figure 18**. Indeed, as most face masks are fastened to the ears over considerably long periods, the reality that the ears would be altered in shape or position of a sort cannot be overemphasised. Hence, the suggestion offered by the man in Figure 18 may be worth a second thought.

Until then, let's keep finding ways to laugh in times of extreme diversity.

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And Finally.....

PALAver

And finally, welcome to our new feature, PALAver, a mystery illustrator who captures key conference moments through the medium of cartoons. Careful. Next time, it could be you.

The PALA committee and helpers meet to discuss the new Corona-conferencing ideas.

Chat

Michael Burke: Marina, you're muted

Marina Lambrou: is my camera on?

Mick Short: is my bow-tie foregrounded?

Katie Wales: Billy, why aren't you wearing a mask?

Billy Clark: it's not relevant, Katie

Lesley Jeffries: ok can we get started, I've got jazz club online in half an hour

Marina Lambrou: where's Elisabetta gone?

Michael Toolan: she's not got her mask on.

Marina Lambrou: Michael your disnarration carries an implicature. So she's gone to get it? Have I read you right?

Lesley Jeffries: Patricia, you're frozen

Patricia Canning: I'm muted. My neighbours are renovating.

Katie Wales: I can't keep up with these maxim flouts.

For PARLANCE contributions, email the editor, Patricia Canning (Utrecht University) at patriciacanning@icloud.com. Til next time!