

THE INTERNATIONAL POETICS AND  
LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION 2009  
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The International Poetics and Linguistics Association annual conference (PALA 2009) on The Art of Stylistics registered a great success. It was sponsored by the John Benjamins Publishing Company and took place at the Roosevelt Academy in Middelburg, the Netherlands, from 28 July to 1 August 2009. The conference covered a wide range of topics in stylistics, poetics, and



associated fields of language and linguistics: narratology, literary linguistics, stylistics and pedagogy, critical discourse analysis, gender and writing, literary translation studies, linguistics and philosophy, metaphor, cognition, pragmatics, text linguistics, and corpus linguistics.

As part of the conference, several presentations were given by plenary speakers. Professor Peter Verdonk (University of Amsterdam) examined ‘the art of rhetoric’ and the relationship between rhetorical patterning and cognitive psychology. He argued that the readers of Ted Hughes’s “Hawk Roosting” fall under the spell of the rich variety of rhetorical patterns around which the text is structured. Professor Keith Oatley (University of Toronto) presented a theory of fiction as a simulation of the self in the social world. His research showed that people reading a short story by Chekhov apparently changed their personalities in individual ways. Dr Charles Forceville (University of Amsterdam) focused on the multimodal art of ‘pictorial runes’ in comics and cartoons. He claimed that the pictorial runes conveying information about events and experiences, such as movement and emotion, have systemic language-like properties. Dr Michaela Mahlberg (University of Liverpool) argued for a corpus stylistics approach in which computer methodology and textual interpretation complement one another, and claimed that new computer tools needed to be developed to investigate the questions suggested by features of a text. With examples mainly drawn from the works of Dickens, she looked at linguistic elements presented in textual worlds, especially the ‘clusters’ – repeated sequences of words – and claimed that Dickens uses language in a way that seems meant to be read aloud. Professor Rob Pope (Oxford Brookes University) focused on the application of stylistics to creative writing. Professor Gerard Steen (VU University Amsterdam) proposed a comprehensive network for studying M-

words – words related to metaphor – in cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, systemic-functional grammar and relevance theory.

Over 120 presentations from other international scholars addressed issues involved in ‘the art of stylistics,’ which is not only restricted to aesthetic aspects of style *per se*, but also includes collateral areas such as corpus linguistics and translation studies. With the development of corpus linguistics, corpus methodologies have sufficiently supported the identification of repeated linguistic patterns and the retrieval of quantitative information on linguistic phenomena. The quantitative findings, with interpretations and literary criticism, supply a polyglossic approach to research literary works. Professor Michael Toolan’s “Immersion and Emotion in Students Reading Poems and Stories: Can Reader Responses and Corpus Methods Converge?” and Dr Dan McIntyre and Brian Walker’s “Discourse Presentation in Early Modern English Writing: A Corpus-based Approach” clearly illustrated this approach. Literary Translation Studies is another new but thriving branch in PALA, which aims to maintain the style of the source text by undertaking stylistic analysis rather than by taking style for granted and dealing with it intuitively. Leading Literary Translation scholar, Professor Jean Boase-Beier, gave a presentation on “The Art of Reading and The Art of Translating Poetry,” claiming that stylistic analysis can explain how a text encourages the creative engagement of its readers. She also suggested that translators should perform creative translation in order to offer the same cognitive effects to their readers.



The conference was held in a large fifteenth-century Flemish gothic building, one of the most beautiful buildings in the Netherlands. In this respect, it wonderfully matched the theme of the conference: The Art of Stylistics. I am sure that the next year’s 30<sup>th</sup> PALA in Genoa, Italy, will be equally interesting.

Further details on PALA 2009 are online at  
<http://www.roac.nl/roac/pala.shtml>.  
 For further information on PALA,  
 see <http://www.pala.ac.uk/>.