

THE FIFTH ANNUAL QUADRIVIUM SYMPOSIUM

ANNA GOTTSCHALL



The fifth annual Quadrivium Symposium was hosted at the University of Leicester, in collaboration with the University of Birmingham, on 4 and 5 November 2009. The event focused upon the training of doctoral students working in the field of English medieval textual cultures through a combination of seminars, workshops and

networking initiatives. The event was convened by Dr Orietta da Rold on behalf of the Medieval Manuscripts Research Consortium (an inter-university team of researchers who share information on funded projects relating to medieval manuscript studies and sponsor the Ph.D. training programme Quadrivium) and subsidised by the University of Leicester Graduate School, the University of Birmingham, and the English Association.

Eleven facilitators from universities including Leicester, Glasgow, Queen's Belfast, Nottingham, St Andrews, Leeds, Birmingham and Cambridge ran six sessions for approximately twenty-five students. Doctoral candidates were first invited to introduce their own research projects and to consider the benefits of attending training and networking sessions. Subsequent sessions explored research methodologies and the importance of working with primary sources, whether local archives, manuscripts or early printed books, and discussed the transition from Ph.D. to postdoctoral work, including making grant applications, contributing to and proposing major research projects. The final sessions addressed the practical issues of academic or alternative careers for doctoral students who might wish to leave the academic world, including law, publishing, librarianships and opportunities in the museums and heritage sector. The Symposium also facilitated networking in a relaxed atmosphere which appeared conducive in forging links between the institutions at the wine reception and Indian meal.

The Quadrivium Programme was established with Arts and Humanities Research Council funding to enhance medieval English textual studies through inclusive consideration of language, palaeography, codicology, textual criticism and editorial

practices. It will continue to provide training for Ph.D. students who are registered in UK universities on doctorates in medieval studies with the sixth Quadrivium Symposium due to be held at the University of York in 2010.

The website for the 2009 Symposium remains online at www2.le.ac.uk/departments/english/quadrivium



“POETIC HAUNTINGS”:
A CROSS-HISTORICAL POETRY SYMPOSIUM
MARY WARD and TIM O’MARA

The Birmingham Poetry Research group held a Symposium on Wednesday 28 April 2010 at what it is hoped will become an annual event. Approximately thirty staff and students gathered to hear six papers, presented by staff and postgraduate students. The poems discussed were very wide ranging, from an anonymous carol of the early-fifteenth century to a mid-twentieth-century sonnet by W.H. Auden. Grouped around the theme of ‘poetic hauntings,’ the papers particularly concentrated on close-textual analysis of the texts under discussion.

Marion Thain opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone and explaining that the aim of the Poetry Research Group, as well as that of the afternoon, is to ensure that, in an English department as large and diverse as that at the University of Birmingham, everyone is given a chance to widen their own horizons by hearing the work of others and, in particular, to cross boundaries such as those of time and style. The programme therefore deliberately mixed papers about poems from different time periods as well as those with varying style and function.

The first panel, ably chaired by Sarah Parker, opened with Steve Ellis and his paper on the prefatory sonnet “To E. M. Forster” and considered the way in which it unites form and function. Despite the use of a determinedly simple vocabulary, it yet manages to celebrate the sonnet form and to incorporate allusions to Forster’s work which give it a particular historical perspective: the complicity of Europe in a fascist war

has driven the shades of Forster's Edwardians from his particular Eden. Mary Ward followed with an examination of the text of an anonymous carol which survives only as an addition to a fourteenth-century manuscript and is little known. Her analysis revealed the subtleties of meaning in what seems at first sight a beguilingly simple lyric: the 'poetic haunting' of the commonplace world of motherhood by the divine nature of the Christ-child. The third paper of this panel was a consideration of a speech from Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* by Hugh Adlington, examining the biblical allusions and references especially in relation to the altered, and slightly later, 'B' text of the work, produced when censorship might have been considered to dictate the amendments. The hauntings here examined were the biblical resonances of the speech, and how the doomed man's cries would have been heard by contemporary audiences as deluded blasphemies

Natalie Jones was an equally able chair for the second panel which opened with Anthea Ingham discussing Swinburne's "Sapphics"; comparing his use of the ghostly figures of Aphrodite and Sappho with the treatment of them by Sappho, in the original Greek, and Baudelaire in his poem "Lesbos." The reworking of these themes, through the medium of three different languages, reveals a complex web of hauntings by both the texts and their treatment by these different authors. Katy Birch gave the second paper, which demonstrated just how much the ideas and vocabulary of Darwin's "The Descent of Man" influenced the re-telling of the old Hungarian legend of the Willi by Mathilde Blind in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was left to David Griffith to present the final paper, appropriately entitled "The Graveyard Slot: Meditations on the Tomb of Ralph, Lord Cromwell, (c. 1450)," in which he discussed the relations between the importance of context, the various functions that such a text might have had and the way in which the ideas contained in it were disseminated.

All six papers produced questions from the audience and points were raised and debated in a way that fulfilled the aims of the afternoon, with links being made between disparate texts and approaches that demonstrated the value of stepping outside conventional boundaries. The only caveat to be made was the length of some of the texts under discussion; possibly disseminating them beforehand would have helped the audience to a fuller appreciation of these papers.

Finally, Luke Kennard gave a beautifully understated reading of some of his own poems to finish an afternoon that was memorable and enjoyable in its creation of new perspectives and connections between apparently unrelated texts.

Thanks are due to Marion Thain, Sarah Parker and Natalie Jones for their competent organisation of the afternoon, the provision of 'poetry packs' containing the

majority of the texts under discussion, and the much-enjoyed food and drink that was available.

“LATE VICTORIANISM AND MODERNISM:
THE MAKING OF MODERNITY”

KATIE LOWE

The inaugural “Late Victorianism and Modernism: The Making of Modernity” Symposium was held on 19 May 2010, and was an exciting afternoon of contemporary research in the often disparate fields of late Victorian and Modernist literature. The University of Birmingham’s pioneering research interest in uniting these fields is supported by the expertise of the English department’s academic staff, and evidenced by its M.Phil. (B) course in Literature and Modernity, as well as by the fruitful and varied research of both past and current Ph.D. students. As the first in the series, this event invited two very highly respected guest speakers to present their research: John Stokes, Special Professor of English and Drama at the University of Nottingham, who has published extensively on the fin-de-siècle, particularly on Oscar Wilde; and Dr David Bradshaw, Reader, CUF Lecturer and Tutorial Fellow at Worcester College, Oxford, whose research has included W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, and Virginia Woolf.

John Stokes’s paper, “Oscar Wilde’s ‘A Note on Some Modern Poets,’” discussed Wilde’s contemporary review of poets, including W.E. Henley and Mary Robinson, both from a contemporary synchronic perspective and in relation to later critical and biographical readings of his work. The ambiguous nature of ‘A Note on Some Modern Poets’ and Stokes’s positioning of it in relation to a variety of fin-de-siècle themes, from the myth of Marsyas to the presence of dialect in poetry, provided an excellent platform for discussion. The nature of the review in contemporary London life was of particular interest in the Q&A session, with its duality of meaning and intention focusing particularly upon Wilde’s ambiguous use of the now antiquated word ‘charming’ to describe the poetry of Mary Robinson. Stokes’s conclusion that the review was replete with oppositions and contradictions, which would come to characterise the modern, succinctly proved the goals of the Symposium, which were to demonstrate the superficial nature of that most overbearing of arbitrary boundaries, the 1900 divide.

On the other side of the boundary, David Bradshaw’s “‘Great Avenues of Civilization’: The Victoria Embankment and Piccadilly Circus Underground Station in the Novels of Virginia Woolf and Chelsea Embankment in *Howards End*,” dealt with the political and social ramifications of Woolf and Forster’s ‘literary geography’ in early-

twentieth-century London. His paper explored the presence of imperial bravura in the imposing architecture of the Victoria Embankment, and its dissonance with the suffering and squalor of the dispossessed that would roam the area at night. Similarly, Woolf's contrast in *The Waves* between the grandeur of the newly opened Piccadilly Circus Underground Station and its links with the 'underworld' shows, for Bradshaw, the ways in which the great landmarks and areas of London always hold a thematic purpose, no matter how briefly they may appear. The connection between Bradshaw and Stokes' papers, the nature of synchronicity and perceived time in the writing of the period, was the focus of the discussion following Bradshaw's paper, with John Stokes referring to the largely neglected Victorian writer Alice Meynell's intense interest with moments and pauses, which anticipates in some way Mrs Dalloway's preoccupation with the clock as an oppressive force, along with wider Modernist representations of time.

Following the success of the inaugural event, the next Symposium is expected to be held in the autumn term, with the series building upon themes and ideas raised in the first event. The organising committee welcomes suggestions for forthcoming symposia, and hopes to continue the work now begun in dismantling the critical divide between these two fascinating and ever-intertwined eras.

“EUROPE: INSIDE OUT”: GRADUATE CENTRE FOR
EUROPE ANNUAL INTERDISCIPLINARY
POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE 2010

CLARE WATTERS

“Europe: Inside Out,” which took place from 25 to 27 March, was the Fourth Annual Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference of the Graduate Centre for Europe (GCfE). GCfE is a postgraduate-led, cross-disciplinary initiative, bringing together postgraduate students with an interest in Europe, from both inside the EU and beyond, aiming to further scholarly exchange on European questions at the University of Birmingham with the support of the Colleges of Arts and Law, Life and Environmental Sciences and Social Sciences. Based on the successful structure of previous GCfE conferences, the 2010 conference programme consisted of an afternoon of skills sessions, a day and a half of plenary panel sessions, two keynote speeches, as well as the launch of the *Birmingham Journal for Europe*.

The conference attracted fifty participants from ten different European universities, demonstrating the international appeal of the event. Nineteen high-quality

papers were presented at seven interdisciplinary panels. Particularly pleasing was the number of Birmingham postgraduates participating, which confirms the existence of a vibrant research community at the University that is bringing multi-disciplinary perspectives to bear on European research. The papers covered topics ranging from European music networks to EU law, from representations of the body in European literature to Europe's development policy towards Latin America. Thus, they invariably presented insightful and detailed, yet accessible perspectives on differing aspects of European culture, history, society and law. Participants were able to experience conceptions of Europe which differed greatly from their own research projects and methods, to defend their own work to specialists and non-specialists alike, and to expand their knowledge of Europe while contributing to discussions outside their own immediate field of expertise.



All panels and keynote speeches were chaired by members of the GCfE Postgraduate Steering Committee, demonstrating both the postgraduate-led nature of the event and enabling committee members to acquire important new academic and transferable skills. It also fostered an open, friendly atmosphere for post-paper discussions, which facilitated stimulating and constructive cross-disciplinary analysis of papers.

Before the presentation of papers, participants began by easing themselves into the conference process, networking and gaining useful research and transferable skills, particularly during the three sessions presented by staff and students of the University of Birmingham. Professor Frank Lough led a useful session on “Bibliographical Software,” followed by a talk on “Viva Tips” presented by Dr Nick Martin and Dr Paola Cori, who provided advice on the viva experience from both the examiner’s and the student’s point of view. The afternoon began with an interactive session on “Running a Postgraduate Journal” given by the *BJLL*’s own General Editors, Cristina Ivanovici and Sarah Macmillan.

The first day also saw the launch of the GCfE’s own online journal the *Birmingham Journal for Europe (BJE)*, edited by Clare Watters and Tara Windsor, the first volume of



which contains a selection of articles originally presented at the 2009 GCfE conference “Europe: A Conference of Paradoxes” and subsequently revised for publication. Work on the second volume of the journal, which will contain proceedings of the 2010 conference, is already underway.

Dr Eleanor Spaventa of Durham Law School completed

the first day’s academic events with an accessible and thought-provoking speech on EU citizenship law, which offered new insights for lawyers and non-lawyers alike. This year also saw the return of Gisela Stuart, MP for Birmingham Edgbaston, to the GCfE conference for the fourth consecutive year. Her keynote address, entitled “Greece and the Euro: Greater Integration or Break-Up” was typically entertaining and provocative, challenging students’ assumptions and preconceptions regarding the politics of contemporary Europe.

The conference, like all of the GCfE’s successful events this year, was the product of the great teamwork shown by all members of the Postgraduate Steering Committee (Clare Watters, Tara Windsor, Judith Allan, Katharina Boehmker, Eleni Christodoulou, Matthew Frear, James Green, Katherine Meikle, Elena Polydorou Rachel Slater and Susanne Thuermer). The committee is indebted to the Academic Director of GCfE, Dr Nicholas Martin, as well as to its administrator, Violet Scott, and also to Dr Oliver Mason for his invaluable assistance with the creation and preparation of the *Birmingham Journal for Europe*.

Preparations for the 2011 GCfE conference, GCfE’s full programme of seminars, skills sessions and other events in 2010/11 and for the second volume of the *Birmingham Journal for Europe* are already underway.

*More information on the Graduate Centre for Europe and its forthcoming events can be found at: www.gcf.e.bham.ac.uk
The BJE is available at: www.ejournals.org.uk/BJE*

“WORLDS BUILT OUT OF WORDS”: LITERARY ENVIRONMENTS
ANDREEA RALUCA TOPOR CONSTANTIN

“Worlds Built out of Words: Literary Environments,” held on 28 April 2010, was organised by a group of enthusiastic M.A. students and professors from the Department of English at the University of Bristol. The event itself registered their second achievement, and followed last year’s postgraduate conference on the fascinating subject of “Celebrating the Dead: Anniversaries and the Literary Afterlife.”

The conference consisted of three main parts. It began with a plenary session by Dr Penny Fielding (University of Edinburgh) on “Rivers, Poetry, and the Routes to Romanticism,” subtly connecting the topic of the conference to the twenty-one subsequent paper presentations. The seven panels (Literary Landscapes, Questioning the Nation, Imprint of Place, Writing Outdoors, Poetic Constructions, Imaginary Worlds, and Natural Spaces) included incredible papers on English, American, classical Greek and on Canadian literature. The closing plenary was the highlight of the conference. Alice Oswald, a contemporary award-winning poet, read pieces of her work, amazing poems on the British landscape, and responded to the participants’ questions.

The first panel of the afternoon, in which I presented my paper, was a trans-continental literary journey, as delegates moved from American authors such as Willa Cather and Herman Melville, to Canadian author Margaret Laurence, to arrive smoothly at contemporary British author Steven Hall. The talks specifically examined the ideas of space, place and writing, which joined the American geography to the Canadian prairie and to the ‘un-space’ of our urban landscape, respectively.

In the second part of the afternoon, I had to make a difficult choice between the three simultaneous events and Panel 2 was the winner of the day. The three representatives of the University of Bristol amazed the audience with the connections that they found between their papers on Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita*, Lewis Carroll’s nonsense writing and Plato’s *Phaedrus*, probably discovering more links than the organisers had initially thought possible

A half-day postgraduate conference
Worlds Built out of Words
Literary Environments

Dr. Penny Fielding
'Rivers, Poetry
and the Routes to
Romanticism'

Poetry from
Alice Oswald

Free/All welcome

28th April 2010
University of Bristol, 3-5 Woodland Road
1-6pm (12.30 Registration)
<http://sites.google.com/site/worldsbuiltfromwords>

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when including these papers in the same panel.

During the break and afterwards, many of the speakers in the other panels seemed quite happy with both the follow-up questions and the feedback received. Numerous interesting topics and authors drew my attention: nature in Daniel Defoe's *Caledonia*, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Orwell's fiction, Byron's *Don Juan*, late-Victorian romances, land and gardens in literature, narratives of place, and the writings of Robert Frost, W.S. Graham, Gary Snyder, and of Raymond Carver.

As one might expect, the event was a great success. My belief is that the conference was important on several levels: it was an excellent opportunity for young researchers to present their current academic interests mainly surrounded by peers, and not feeling inhibited by the presence of esteemed academics. The conference clearly served as a meeting point for several 'literary environments' and, last but not least, it was an event attended by prospective postgraduates who wanted to feel the pulse of both university life and to experience the audiences' expectations at such events.

Above all, I sincerely admired the organisational skills of these young postgraduates who managed the task professionally and ensured the high standards of this conference on literary environments.

Further details can be found online at <http://sites.google.com/site/worldsbuiltfromwords/>

“TEXT-MINING IN THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES: THE INTERFACE BETWEEN CONCEPTUAL HISTORY, CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND CORPUS LINGUISTICS”

WANG FANG

On 13 and 14 May 2010 “Text-mining in the digital humanities,” held at the University of Lancaster, became the first major event to highlight the connection between Conceptual history, Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics. These are closely related disciplines and there is huge potential for collaboration between them.

Conceptual history, although heterogeneous, consists of two basic assumptions: that concepts are used as tools and weapons in political discussions (i.e. political actors can use value-laden concepts to serve their own political purposes) and that concepts acquire meanings from their usage in respective historical contexts. Critical Discourse Analysis also addresses political language analysis: Discourse is taken to refer to authentic texts used in multi-layered environments to perform social functions. Analysing discourse is understood as the systematic attempt to identify patterns in text,

link them to patterns in the context, and vice versa. Doing so critically means unveiling and challenging assumptions about language and society, as well as recognising discourse as a potentially powerful agent in social change. Corpus Linguistics aims at finding patterns of language within large corpora of authentic language data. It developed to assist language teaching and learning, but the role it can play in discourse analysis has been widely observed by discourse analysts from numerous disciplines.

The methodological synergy of Corpus Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been previously identified by Lancaster-based researchers. Moreover, the discourse-historical approach in CDA developed by Ruth Wodak (Lancaster) overlaps with Conceptual History (CH) in its study of the discursive construction of collective identities which can themselves be seen as concepts, each with their own history. Thus, this conference and its organisers were well placed to articulate connections between the three disciplines and offer excellent opportunities for future interdisciplinary collaborations.

Twenty-four speakers from around fifteen international universities, including those in the UK, Germany, Austria and China, presented at the conference. The papers ranged from methodological remarks on project in Conceptual History to the discussion of the discourse-historical approach in CDA. This included five keynote speakers. Jan Ifversen from Aarhus University (Denmark) pointed out a series of important linguistic challenges to conceptual history, including the unclear distinction between referentiality and context. Michal Krzyzanowski from Lancaster University emphasised the role that German tradition of history of concepts, or *Begriffsgeschichte*, has played in diverse Discourse Historical studies of the last decade. Michaela Mahlberg from the University of Nottingham summarised the challenges at the interface of corpus linguistics and historical discourse analysis by providing the example of ‘popery’ in seventeenth-century pamphlet literature; and Gerlinde Mautner from Vienna University, who pioneered the use of corpus-linguistics techniques in CDA, discussed both the potential synergies to be gained by combining the two approaches, and also the tensions, challenges, and pitfalls involved. Hans Erich Bödeker dealt with two further issues: the characteristic traits of the subject of the history of concepts and the main theoretical problem of a history of concepts. He concluded that a concept does not have a history: the historiographic history of concepts ultimately turns out to focus on the usage of distinct concepts by distinct speakers, in distinct circumstances for precise purposes.

Other papers included discussions of the concepts of democracy, Scottish independence, excellence and so on, to show how research in CH, CDA and CL can be combined. Representations of discourse subjects like Islam, militants, the British

Suffrage movement, and 9/11, among other topics, were examined by speakers using combined research approaches. Also, some presentations led to a full discussion on the methodological synergies, such as “Methodological remarks on a transnational project in conceptual history” given by João Feres, and the project description of Enroller which aims to enable the conceptual searches in the vast majority of corpora.

In addition, the software development engaging the collaboration of CH, CDA and CL was also addressed. The development of increasingly sophisticated software programs, such as Lancaster’s UCREL Semantic Analysis System (USAS) and the variant spelling detector (VARD) opens up exciting new research possibilities for mining the ever-increasing number of historical texts available in digital form. During the conference, the software such as Sketch Engine, which allows salient grammatical patterns to be quickly identified, was introduced by Paul Baker at Lancaster University. Uffe Jakobsen from the University of Greenland demonstrated how the software tool “Semaskop” could be operated and introduced the function of collocations for mapping different usages by different actor types.

This conference provided a unique opportunity for researchers in CH, CDA and CL to discover how they might benefit from mutual collaboration. At the end of the conference, discussions for future collaboration were conducted.

MEDIÉVAL MANUSCRIPT STUDIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

MARY WARD

This week-long AHRC-funded training course, held from 17 to 22 May 2010, was organised by the Institute of English Studies. It was a highly intensive course, covering the making of a manuscript, the manuscripts themselves and then considering the later history of manuscripts and their translation into digitised format. The latter included workshops at which students were able to practise the techniques involved, learning the theory behind the painstaking detail necessary to prepare a document so that it appears on a computer screen as an accurate representation and also in a fully searchable form.

Every aspect of a manuscript was considered during the early part of the week, which was based at Cambridge. Dr Peter Stokes of King’s College London and Cambridge University, and Dr Hanna Vorholt of the Warburg Institute lectured on the preparation of the parchment and ink, binding techniques, palaeography, decoration, codicology, and provenance, while Professor Nicholas Pickwoad of University of the Arts gave a most informative lecture on how much can be learnt from the binding,

something that is often not considered in detail when discussing a manuscript. The afternoons were given over to library visits. In small groups the students were shown the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, and the libraries of Trinity and St. John's colleges. In each case, the librarians had carefully selected suitable manuscripts to be looked at in detail by the students and it was a rare opportunity to see manuscripts at close quarters, in some cases turn the pages, to discuss them with experts, and to learn at first hand how to find and use all the information the document can yield.

The course moved to London for the second part of the week, with Dr Gabriel Bobard and Dr Elena Pierazzo, both of King's College London, giving lectures and workshops on transcribing, editing, cataloguing, and encoding texts and providing exercises to allow the students to discover for themselves the complexity of the task. Dr Julia Craig-McFeely of Oxford University then demonstrated the use of digital imaging and the ways in which it can be used to recover otherwise unreadable passages, or erased texts. In London too there were library visits, to the Senate House and Wellcome libraries, again with some interesting manuscripts to be studied with the assistance of such fine scholars as Professor Michelle Brown of the Institute of English Studies and Professor David Ganz of King's College, London. Dr Tim Bolton of Sotheby's gave a fascinating lecture on the book trade, provenance, and the various clues to be looked for in terms of price codes, buyers' marks and so on, while Simon Tanner of King's College London gave a most instructive and practical lecture on how to develop, plan, and organise digital manuscript projects.

Places on this course, which only takes twenty students, are highly sought after and the University of Birmingham was fortunate to be represented by two students this year, Anna Gottschall and Mary Ward. The course was very well organised and copious amounts of information were available to students, including the purely practical aspect of how to get to and from the various venues in London. Any medievalist will find this course extremely rewarding as well as enormously hard work.