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SLJN

NEWSLETTER

no. 38 March 2005

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All materials to be published (reports, reviews, short articles etc.) should be sent to the above address.

1. SLIN Conferences and Seminars

The 12th SLIN (Historical English language studies in Italy) National Conference, organized by Maria Luisa Maggioni and Margherita Ulrych, is quite close now. As repeatedly announced it will take place at **Milano-Cattolica University** on **9-11 June, 2005** dealing with such an intriguing subject as *The language(s) of religion: a diachronic approach*.

Plenary lectures will be delivered by **Lynne Long** (University of Warwick) and **Domenico Pezzini** (University of Verona)

Some 20 proposals covering most sub-thematic areas are being evaluated by the **Scientific Committee**, formed by M.L. Maggioni, M. Ulrych, D.Hart, M. Gotti, G. Iamartino, G. Mazzon, D. Pezzini and coordinated by N. Pantaleo. Acceptance will be made known to prospective speakers by the end of March and the Conference timetable will be communicated soon afterwards.

Registration. All those interested in participating are required to become registered **by 30 April** either

--writing straight to Prof. Maria Luisa Maggioni, Dipartimento di Scienze linguistiche, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Largo Gemelli 1, 20123 Milano.

e-mail: marialuisa.maggioni@unicatt.it or: oobma@tin.it

Off. tel.: 02.7234-2569; home tel.: 02.9342875; Cell. tel.: (0039) 348. 7307974

or

--contacting the Department secretary, Mrs. Galbusera: tel.02.7234-2920; fax: 02.7234-3667

Registration should provide details of dates of arrival and departure, accommodation chosen including, if desired, a request of hotel booking, meals needed and participation in the social dinner. Please give your e-mail for quick contact

Accommodation

Meals may be taken at the university restaurant for an average price of € 8.50 each. The social dinner on June 10 (Friday evening) will cost approximately € 50.00. Coffee will be served in the breaks.

Here is a provisional list of hotels in Milan, all of them reasonably close to the

Conference site.

1. HOTEL PALAZZO DELLE STELLINE, Corso Magenta 61,
tel. 02 4818431 Single € 82 double € 122
2. KING HOTEL, Corso Magenta 19,
tel. 02 874432 Single € 85 double € 125
3. HOTEL MENTANA, Via Morigi 2,
tel. 02 86454255 Single € 100 double € 145
4. HOTEL MERCURE RELAIS - MILANO, Via Conca del Naviglio 20,
tel. 02 58104141 prices to be agreed upon

2. HEL and other (English) linguistics conferences and seminars

Reminders and updatings

§ A Conference headed **Language History from Below – Linguistic Variation in the Germanic Languages from 1700 to 2000** will be held at the University of Bristol on **6-9 April, 2005**. Invited guest speakers are **Ana Deumert** (Melbourne), **David Denison** (Manchester), **Ernst Hakon Jahr** (Kristiansand), **Angelika Linke** (Zurich), **Richard Watts** (Bern).

The conference chooses a different perspective from such usual events: non-prestigious non-standard varieties and writers normally neglected by official language historiography will be focused. Such **topics** as literacy vs. orality, schooled vs. unschooled speech and writings, prescriptivism and norm identification, linguistic continuities and changes in speech communities, cross linguistic similarities and diachronic differences within such **approaches** as social identity, social networks, communicative patterns of discourse, gender-based variation, contact-induced phenomena and based on such **sources** as 'ego'-documents, administrative and legal texts, pamphlets and newspapers are expected to be dealt with.

The website where to get full information on the Conference is:

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/depts/German/languagehistory.html>

§§ The **First International Conference on the linguistics of Contemporary English** is announced for **23-36 June, 2005**, based in **Edinburgh**. The conference aims at (1) encouraging the cross-fertilization of ideas between different frameworks and research traditions, (2) promoting discussion among researchers interested in linguistic theories (phonologists, syntacticians, variationists, etc.) regarding what we mean when we use the word 'English' to describe the linguistic phenomena which we work to explain. Work which brings in diachrony in order to explain the structure of Present-Day English at any level of analysis is certainly welcome. Invited speakers are **Bas Aarts**, **Luigi Burzio**, **Lisa Green** and **Peter Trudgill**.

The website to consult is <http://www.englang.ed.ac.uk/iclce/iclce2005.html>

§§§ The Department of English of the university of **Santiago de Compostela** (Spain) will host on **17-20 July 2005** the **International Conference "New reflections on Grammaticalization 3"** (**NRG 3**) which comes after **NRG 1**, Potsdam 1999, and **NRG 2**, Amsterdam 2002. The aim of the Conference is to bring together contributions from different orientations within the field of grammaticalization, question old assumptions and come up with new ideas. The Conference will take place at the Philology building in the North Campus. The invited guest speakers are **William Croft** (Manchester), **Zygmunt Frajzyngier** (Colorado Un.), **Anna Giacalone Ramat** (Pavia) and **Tania Kuteva** (Dusseldorf).

All further information may be accessed through the following Conference website: www.usc.es/ia303/Gramma3/NRG3.htm

§§§§ **5ICOME** (Fifth International Conference on middle English) will be held in **Naples** on **24 to 27 August, 2005** at the Conference Centre of "Federico II" University. Plenary lectures will be given by **Hans-Jürgen Diller** (Ruhr-University Bochum), **Dieter Kastovsky** (Wien) and **Laura C. Wright** (Cambridge).

For any further information please apply to the Conference organizer **Gabriella Mazzon**, Dipartimento di Filologia moderna, via Porta di Massa 1, 80139 Naples, e-mail gabrina@aliceposta.it or visit the Conference site: www.icome5.unina.it

New entries

§ 4th **PALC** (Practical Applications in language and computers) **International Conference** will be held from **7 to 9 April, 2005** at the Lodz University Conference Centre, **Lodz**, Poland

The general topic of the conference is the relationship between recent IT developments and their practical uses in a variety of linguistic fields, including language teaching/learning, translation, literary studies, discourse analysis, lexicography, corpus linguistics, information retrieval systems, etc. The conference is expected to provide attendees with the opportunity to participate in discussions led by experts and visionaries, and to network with peers who realize the challenges and benefits of using computer tools in linguistic research. Plenary speakers will be **Ahmad Khurshid** (Un. of Surrey), **Tony McEneaney** (Un. of Lancaster), **Randi Peppen** (Northern Arizona Un., USA)

A number of special events will be featured during the conference, including the official launch of the 'PELCRA Referential Corpus of Polish' and two special workshops on 'Cognitive Corpus Linguistics' and 'E-education'. The cost of conference registration, accommodation and fullboard at the Conference Centre is € 525

Please find all further information on the PALC Conference and accompanying workshops, along with details of the city of Lodz on our website (www.palc.la.uni.lodz.pl) or contact Dr Jacek Walinski Head of the Computational Linguistics Unit Department of English, University of Lodz al. Kosciuszki 65, 90-514 Lodz, Poland Telephone number: +48 42 66-55-220

§§ **SLE38** (**Societas Linguistica Europaea**) on *Formal, Functional and Typological Perspectives on Discourse and Grammar*, **Valencia, 7-10 September, 2005**. The venue will be the faculty of Philology, located by the football stadium and within walking distance of the railway station. Invited speakers are **Johan van der Auwera** (Antwerp, SLE President), **Antonio Briz** (Valencia), **Sonia Cristofaro** (Pavia), **Eva Hajicova** (Prague), **Emilio Ridruejo** (Valladolid).

Papers on the following topics are welcome:

- formal, functional and typological accounts of grammatical and discourse-related issues;
- formal, functional and typological analysis of morphological and syntactic structures;

- formal, functional and typological accounts of textual phenomena (inversion, discourse anaphora, deixis, etc.);
- historical pragmatics;
- pragmatic analyses of functionally-grounded constructions;
- theoretical studies aiming at grounding formal or functional accounts within a theory of science.

Unsigned 500-word abstracts clearly stating (i) topic/problem of the paper and the research questions to be discussed, (ii) approach or method and data used, (iii) (expected) results should be submitted to sle2005@sl-europaea.org by **1 April, 2005**. Acceptance from the Scientific Committee will be notified by e-mail by 30 April.

The registration form printable from the conference website should be accompanied by a € 90 payment (students: € 30), covering local expenses, the conference bags and set of abstracts, reception and coffee breaks, should reach the organizers before 30 May

For any further information please contact Salvador Pons, Departamento de Filología Española, Avda. Blasco Ibañez, 32, 46010, Valencia, Spain. Phone 0034 963983269; fax 0034 963864492; e-mail salvador.pons@uv.es

§§§ **SELIM 17** (17th International Conference of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature), A Coruña, 29th September – 1st October 2005. Invited plenary speakers are **Luis Iglesias-Rabade** (Santiago de Compostela), **John McKinnell** (Durham), **Donald Scragg** (Manchester), **Tom Shippey** (St. Louis, USA). **Proposals** of papers, including all usual details – institutional affiliation, telephone, fax and e-mail address, and also technical support if needed, should be sent in electronic form under 100-to-250 word abstracts to: selim17@udc.es before 18th **April, 2005**. For further information please contact the organizers:

Isabel Moskowich-Spiegel Fandiño: Isabel@udc.es

Begona Crespo Garcia: begona@udc.es

or visit SELIM web page: www.uniovi.es/~selim

and the conference URL: www.udc.es/dep/finc/selimXVII.htm

Other miscellaneous events (information drawn from *Bollettino della Società di linguistica italiana* or the SLIN Bergamo University site)

HEL-LEX (New Approaches in English Historical Lexis), Helsinki, 17th - 19th March 2005

50th Annual Conference of ILA (International Linguistic Association) on *Language and the Law*, New York 15-17 April. Information c/o Johanna J. Woltjer, 511 West 112th St., 14, New York, NY 10025-1634; e-mail: jwoltjer@earthlink.net

4th Meeting of Maarstricht-Lodz Duo Colloquium on *Translation and Meaning*. Please contact, if interested: m.m.g.j.thelen@hszuyd.nl

40th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Western Michigan University, 5th - 8th May 2005

3rd ICLaVE3 (International Conference on Language variation in Europe). Please look at the Conference site www.iclave.org

The Futhark and the Fur Trade: Reconstructing language Contact in the Pre-Viking Period, Umea, 1-4 June 2005

2005 Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature, Brock University, Canada, 10-15 July, 2005

6th Meeting of ALT (Association for Linguistic Typology), Padang, West Indonesia, 21-25 July. Information from gil@eva.mpg.de

17th ICHL (International Conference on Historical Linguistics), Madison, Wisconsin (USA), 31st July-5th August, 2005

12th International Conference on Methods in Dialectology, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, 1st - 5th August, 2005

DELSaVE3 (Directions in English Language Studies), Manchester, 6th - 8th April 2006

ICCA 06, International Conference on Conversational Analysis, Helsinki, 11-14 May, 2006. Information from eveliina.korpela@helsinki.fi

3. Conference reports (R. Dury, N. Brownlee)

'Language and Text Variation in Business and Economics', Università di Firenze, 3-4 February 2005.

The Florence conference was organized to publicize the results of a University research project co-financed by both Ministry and individual universities: one of the famous 'co-fin' projects of 'notable national interest'. These require the preparation of a long and complicated application—so hats off to the two SLIN members **Gabriella Del Lungo** and **Marina Dossena** (as well as synchronists **Julia Bamford** and the group coordinator **Marina Bondi**) for doing that and getting the prestigious funding too.

The diachronic part of the conference only occupied the morning of the second day, starting with a **plenary lecture** from **Irma Taavitsainen** of Helsinki University on 'The construction of professional identities in historical perspective'. This great contributor to historical linguistics manages to combine academic eminence with a cordiality and I would say a modesty that restores one's faith in human beings (soon brought back to normal by a glance at the daily newspaper). The talk began with an overview of different approaches to the study of the construction of social identities and the choice of an ethnographic approach which 'aims at discovering people's own views and authentic contexts of the objects of study'. For historical investigation, she decided to use historical linguistic corpora to get an idea of emerging and varying identities and social esteem (though the inevitable statistical basis of such an approach would make it a little different from traditional ethnography, but let's not quibble about labels). The first part of the talk was a mapping of the field: a listing of professional names across time from the Helsinki and other corpora—here we saw how profession-names emerge and change value in the context of competing names. The second part moved on to the names in texts culled from corpus collections such as the Corpus of Early English Correspondence, the Zürich English Newspapers Corpus and the Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts. These gave insights into the characterization of the professions, while an examination of sixteenth-century dialogues gave more insight into their discursive practises. The talk was in the manner of a presentation of a research project and its first results.

The second talk of the morning, from **Paola Tornaghi** of Milan-Bicocca, was on the late fifteenth-century rhyming *Lybelle, A Trade Policy*. This was an authoritative philological overview, perhaps the best talk I have seen from Paola, which set the work in its textual, social and economic context, discussed

its ultimate aims and the attitudes of the writer towards the merchants and cloth makers. It was a surprise to most of us to see how this work, apparently by a relatively humble member of a clothing guild, makes such a clear economic analysis (national interests would be greater served by finishing English cloth in England). The talk ended with a series of observations on linguistic points.

The morning ended with the panel discussion by **Gabriella Del Lungo** (the conference organizer), **Marina Dossena** and myself on the achievements of the diachronic members of the group. I started by narrated my experience in transcribing business letters for Marina's corpus of 19th-century Scottish correspondence, as an introduction to an outline of my paper given at the Vienna ICEHL conference in which I maintained that the amount information contained in the manuscript text, its physical manifestation and the immediate paratext is probably infinite so that transcriptions will always involve choices of what to transcribe. Marina then gave some more information on her corpus and the results of the first analyses, and Gabriella Del Lungo outlined her study of model business letters in manuals published in Italy in the late nineteenth century. The three members of the panel presented their work without notes, handouts or OHPs and also commented on each other's work, so a real discussion developed.

The other one-and-a-half days were devoted to **synchronic matters** which I will try to sketch more rapidly. The first of **plenary speaker** was **Anna Mauranen** from Tampere University on 'Repetition and repair in making a point'. Although repetition has been much studied in written texts in its cohesive function, spoken repetition has been strangely seen as mere 'dysfluency'. After a mention of psycholinguistic aspects of unintentional repetition, the centre of the talk dealt with more deliberate acts, with examples from academic discourse. Here, repetition can be seen as having clear functions, even though it often involves superficially fragmentary elements. Basically it is used to clarify the structure of the argument, clarify the structure of the argument—making it easier (from the listeners point-of-view) for the thread to be picked up after a parenthesis, allowing the creation of intricate hierarchies, and the underlining of parallel structure when listing or summarizing.

We continued with **two talks** from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University: **Martin Warren** who reported on how people in business contexts disagree, a study based on the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (the largest prosodically-transcribed corpus, about one million words). He started by listing the disagreement strategies taught in local textbooks, then compared them with the results of the corpus investigation. In the recorded data, unlike the textbooks, the favourite strategy is positive acknowledgement of the other speaker's point

followed by a mitigating device (like 'so?') and then the disagreement. The disagreement is often prepared by high key to show contrast. The following talk by **Lancy Fung** focussed more on the cultural-contact situation in Hong Kong and the way this influences the production and interpretation of speech-acts. The prize for the best presentation of the conference has to go to the next speaker, **John Haviland**, an ethnographer who brought us evidence from fascinating fieldwork in the main square of Mexico City: a Powerpoint presentation with audio- and videoclips, embellished with photographs and his own coloured drawings. His subject was the hucksters (*merolicos*) who sell amulets often for a week's wages of the poor buyers. Seeming to offer free entertainment at first, they create a group by spatial, corporeal and linguistic interaction and finally subtly instil fear in their audience of the consequences of non-compliance. The similarities with an unnameable Italian politician seemed all too clear.

After lunch came short 10-minute talks from the poster-presenters. One of these (by **Tomaso Pellin** of Venice) was historical, but referred to Chinese language history: the different strategies used to translate new economic terms in early Chinese translations of economics texts (1881 and 1902), i.e. the choice of calques or forms closer to the original English. Another contribution that struck me was by **Angela Stucchi** of the Cattolica who talked about metaphor not as an adornment but as a vehicle for new insights. This is a point often made in the history of science, but it interested me because it made me think that metaphors are not very frequent in our communications. Perhaps this is because we are close to the data in many cases and metaphor is useful at more theoretical levels (Jean Aitchison, for example, is notable in her constant use of metaphors). The posters themselves were too densely textual to be read with any ease: six typewritten sheets of A4 don't have an immediate impact. I would think that they should rather give the essence of a study, using all the techniques of graphic communication to make a few points very clearly. (It would be interesting to see one presented ironically in the form of a news story in the Sun.)

After coffee, **Britt-Louise Gunnarsson** gave the second plenary talk, on an episode of Swedish language history: the switch from Swedish to English when the *Ekonomisk Tidskrift* became *The Swedish* [later *The Scandinavian*] *Journal of Economics* in 1966. This also had an effect on the conventions of textual organization, as Anglophone conventions were gradually adopted along with the new language. A knock-on effect was to make the rival *Ekonomisk Debatt* less of a strictly academic journal and appeal also to a readership in the area of politics.

Philip Shaw from Stockholm next distinguished between evaluation in

promotional texts (software design proposals and house agent's descriptions) and in explicitly evaluative texts (book reviews). In the former, evaluative items are placed in 'given' position ('This delightful house...') while in the latter they are placed in focus position ('This house is delightful'). He also noted the typical pairing of praise and blame in reviews (a point Davide Giannoni had talked of in software reviews at the 2001 CERLIS conference in Bergamo, and that seemed to have affinities with the agreement-disagreement pairing that Martin Warren had talked of earlier). **Gina Poncini** from Milan then gave a talk about how the use of 'we' was used in a wine industry event to create a feeling of a 'shared world' among producers of the same kind of wine. The session was then wound up by **Sonia Piotti** and her analysis of annual reports and how the language is organized to promote an image of relevance and reliability.

The afternoon itself ended with a panel of co-fin members giving short reports on their work. **Giuliana Diani**, **Davide Giannoni**, **Franca Poppi** and **Marc Silver** took turns in presenting their work on evaluation in various kinds of specialized discourse (business, economics and academic).

The conference dinner was held in the upper room of a friendly and crowded trattoria near the centre, where we had a wedding-style feast that began with innumerable *antipasti*, four or five *primi* and I think three roasts (though I wasn't counting by then). It was all very convivial and just the right choice for abundance of excellent food in a relaxed and slightly noisy atmosphere. I found myself next to Anna Maurenen and we had an interesting long chat about her hobby of painting. But the conversation generally went very well, so thanks to Gabriella Del Lungo for choosing the place and indeed for organizing the whole conference.

The second day began with the diachronic section, already front-shifted to the beginning of this report. This was followed by two talks on the evolving genre of emails. First **Akiko Okamura** on the name form adopted in greetings and salutations, from the point-of-view of differing Japanese and English conventions (the situation causes problems of choice, with local norms having an influence on forms in English-language messages, and often the same writer using different forms in different emails). Then **Julio Gimenez** on the way email textual conventions have changed in the last few years, leading him to see it as a genre in continuous adaptive change like a complex adaptive system.

After lunch came the third panel of the group-members: **Janet Bowker**, **Ersilia Incelli**, **Donatella Malavasi** and **Polly Walsh** on their various studies in the areas of genres, modes and media—always from the point-of-view of evaluation, the focus of the whole project.

Francesca Bargiela from Nottingham Trent University then gave the last plenary, on 'multimodal communication' (which brings together various forms of semiosis, such as language, gesture, visual images, music etc.). She used this approach to look at the self-presentation of an online bank, smile.co.uk. The last two papers looked mainly at newspapers. **Elena Collavin**, presently in Helsinki, showed us the ways in which genetically-modified foods were presented as monstrous. **Paola Catenaccio** of Milan looked at the extent press-releases from the cracking, then crashing, Enron Corporation were taken over verbatim into newspapers without reference to source. We also saw how these releases were cleverly constructed to make them easy to take over. (It would be interesting to see a similar study of Italian government press-releases and government-controlled media).

Thus at five o'clock the conference ended, and we waited for ten minutes or so at the bus-stop outside the peripheral 'Polo delle Scienze Sociali': we, used to the south, shivering at the cold, Irma Taavitsainen from the north wondering with pleasure at the persistent lightness of the sky.

Richard Dury

CHINED (Conference on Historical News Discourse) took place in Florence on 2-3 September 2004. The conference organisers were **Nicholas Brownlees** (Florence) and **Patrick Studer** (Limerick). Given the historical dimension of the conference, news discourse was considered inclusive of not just the hard news of daily newspapers but also other forms of news discourse in genres preceding or existing alongside the creation and development of the traditional press.

The conference was very fortunate to have three excellent plenary speakers. They were Maurizio Gotti (Bergamo), Andreas Jucker (Zurich), Susan Herring (Indiana).

Maurizio Gotti's paper was entitled: "Disseminating Early Modern Science: Specialized News Discourse in *The Philosophical Transactions*". **Susan Herring** gave a paper on: "Relating Historical Discourse Genres and New Media Genres: The Case of Weblogs", while **Andreas Jucker's** paper was entitled: "'But 'tis believed that ...': speech and thought presentation in early English newspapers".

The other speakers were: **Udo Fries** (Zurich): The Style of 18th-Century English Newspapers; Word frequencies; **Nicholas Brownlees**: The Battle for Hearts and Minds, or, the Cut and Thrust of Civil War News Discourse; **Patrick**

Studer: Discourse Organisation in 18th Century Newspapers; **Ellen Valle** (Turku): **Early Modern** scientific news: the origins and development of scientific news discourse in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society of London; **Anne McKim** (Waikato): Daniel Defoe, Newsmonger; **Marina Dossena** (Bergamo): Forms of Argumentation and Verbal Aggression in the Darien Pamphlets; **Mirella Billi** (Viterbo): Ladies Fashion Magazines: Social Life and Consumerism in Eighteenth-Century England; **Beate Dreike** (Cork): The Beginnings of Ephemeral Novels in Germany; **Valerie Wainwright** (Florence): Contextualising Sterne's Sentimental Journey: Anglo-French Relations and the *Critical Review*; **Andreas Stuhlmann** (Cork): Polemical Interventions. Swift, Lessing, and the Question of Intellectual Combat in 18th News Discourse; **Gabriella Del Lungo** (Florence): Nineteenth-century business correspondence in English: Some handbooks for teaching letter writing to Italians; **Laura Wright** (Cambridge): Street addresses and directions in mid-eighteenth century London newspaper advertisements; **Susan Kermas** (Lecce): From Herbal to Advert.

All the papers were warmly received, and none more so than Udo Fries's. A special word of mention must go to Udo in that it was thanks to his initiative, encouragement and support that the **ZEN corpus** was created. The **Zürich English Newspaper corpus**, the largest historical news discourse in existence, is of immeasurable use to historical news scholars.

The conference had been organised with a certain trepidation. As far as the convenors knew, it was the first of its kind, and so there was little idea as to how much interest it would create. In brief, would it really be international, would the participants find the work of their colleagues useful and stimulating, and what about the wine at the Conference dinner? We had booked in at Ristorante Frescobaldi, a Florentine restaurant owned by one of the most renowned wine producers in Tuscany, but just how good would the wines be?

I'd like to think that the answers to all the above questions were affirmative. Certainly, when at the end of the conference Andreas Jucker and Udo Fries announced that CHINED2 would be held in Zürich, everyone seemed very pleased.

Selected papers from the conference will be published by Peter Lang. The title of the volume is: *News Discourse in Early Modern Britain*.

Nicholas Brownlees

4. Reviews and bibliographical information (P. Tornaghi, N. Brownlees)

Here is a nice, half-humorous review by Paola Tornaghi (Milan), followed by the usual bibliographical note written by Nicholas Brownlees (Florence) for the *Newsletter*.

Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves. The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, Profile Books, London 2003, pp 209.

A panda walked into a cafe. He ordered a sandwich, ate it, then pulled out a gun and shot the waiter. 'Why?' groaned the injured man. The panda shrugged, tossed him a badly punctuated wildlife manual and walked out. And sure enough, when the waiter consulted the book, he found an explanation. 'Panda,' ran the entry for his assailant. 'Large black and white mammal native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves.'

Punctuation really does matter, even if, only occasionally, it is matter of life or death!

At a time when most communication seems to be taken over by Internet instant messaging, and cell phone text messages, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, written by Lynne Truss and published by Profile Books Ltd, London 2003, book of the Year 2004, is definitely a timely clarion call to preserve good language and good punctuation. The title itself is a joke! The book tells you the rules, but it is also full of jokes and anecdotes. "It is a sort of celebration of punctuation. You can't help cheering it on, because it has done such a good job in its humble way."

Lynne Truss lives in Brighton, England. She is a writer and broadcaster who started out as a literary editor with a blue pencil and then got sidetracked. She is the author of three novels and numerous radio comedy dramas. She spent six years as the television critic of *The Times* of London, followed by four years as a sports columnist for the same newspaper. She won Columnist of the Year for her work for *Women's Journal*. She now reviews books for the *Sunday Times* of London and is a familiar voice on BBC Radio 4.

Lynne Truss precisely knows when her "damned stickler personality started to get the better" of her. In the autumn of 2002 she was making a series of programmes about punctuation for BBC Radio4, called *Cutting a Dash* ("A sparkling series of essays"—*Daily Telegraph*), which led to the writing of *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*. The book became a runaway success in the UK, hitting number one on the bestseller lists and prompting extraordinary headlines such as

"Grammar Book Tops Bestseller List" —BBC *News*. With more than 500,000 copies in print in her native England, Lynne Truss is ready to rally the troops on this side of the pond with her rousing cry, "Sticklers unite!"

Eats, Shoots and Leaves adopts a militant approach and attempts to recruit an army of punctuation vigilantes: send letters back with the punctuation corrected. Do not accept sloppy emails. Climb ladders at dead of night with a pot of paint to remove the redundant apostrophe in "Video's sold here".

"Part of one's despair, of course, is that the world cares nothing for the little shocks endured by the sensitive stickler," writes Lynne Truss, "While we look in horror at a badly punctuated sign, the world carries on around us, blind to our plight. We are like the little boy in *The Sixth Sense* who can see dead people, except that we can see dead punctuation. Whisper it in petrified little-boy tones: dead punctuation is invisible to everyone else — yet we see it all the time"

Lynne Truss breezes through all the punctuation characters in a conversational manner. Her book is downright funny in practically every page, such as here: "Getting your itses mixed up is the greatest solecism in the world of punctuation. No matter that you have a PhD and have read all of Henry James twice. If you still persist in writing, "Good food at it's best," you deserve to be struck by lightning, hacked up on the spot and buried in an unmarked grave." Or here: "A sign has gone up in a local charity-shop window which says: "Can you spare any old records" (no question mark), and I dither daily outside on the pavement. Should I go in and mention it? It does matter that there's no question mark on a direct question. It is appalling ignorance. But what will I do if the elderly charity-shop lady gives me the usual disbelieving stare and tells us me to bugger off, get a life and mind my own business?"

The Author also weaves in the origins of punctuation marks and tells stories with a wry sense of humor. Her descriptions of even the most mundane subjects are lively and vivid: "In the family of punctuation, where the full stop is daddy and the comma is mummy, and the semicolon quietly practices the piano with crossed hands, the exclamation mark is the big attention-deficit brother who gets over-excited and breaks things and laughs too loudly."

With humour, this volume guides us and encourages us to use punctuation in a way that will bring life and character to the written word. It is a book that can be read as a tale from beginning to end and used as a reference guide in moments of confusion. Many punctuation guides already exist explaining the principles of the apostrophe; the comma; the semi-colon. These books do their job but somehow punctuation abuse does not diminish. Why? Because people who can't punctuate don't read those books! She loves the old schoolbooks

about usage and abuse by authors like Fowler and Partridge, "even if everything they say has gone by the board now".

Eats, Shoots & Leaves is a successful book because the author does not fit the stereotype of a stern monitor of the English language. She has learnt most of her lessons about English usage from working in journalism, and in work she dares to say that, with the English system of punctuation patently endangered, it is time to look at commas and semicolons, apostrophes and question marks and see them for the wonderful and necessary things they are.

Paola Tornaghi

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Recent Bibliographical Information

(If SLIN newsletter subscribers have books which have been published in the last six months they are asked to send the bibliographical details of their works to Nicholas Brownlee (email: n.brownlee@libero.it)

Barisone, Ermanno / Maggioni, Maria Luisa / Tornaghi, Paola (eds.). 2004. *The History of English and the Dynamics of Power. Proceedings of the 8th Italian Conference on the History of the English Language*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

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Geoffrey Hughes: Words of Power: Changes, Registers and Institutions - Anneli Meurman-Solin: Data and Methods in Scottish Historical Linguistics - Paola Tornaghi: Power of a Man and Power of a Language: Alfred's Vision of Kingship in the Old English Translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* - Philip Barras: The Power of Latin over English Medical Vocabulary: Some Diachronic Considerations - Gerardo Mazzaferro: Political Hegemony and Written Standard Language in 12th-Century England - Maria Luisa Maggioni: «... to alle his holde ilerde and ileawede ... » Baronial Reform and the Role of English in the Proclamation of the Provisions of Oxford (1258) - Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti: Discursive Practices and Public Use of English at the End of the 14th Century - Patricia Kennan: Rhetoric, Empowerment and the Renaissance - Maurizio Gotti: The Evolution of the Concept of "Cant" in the 16th and 17th Centuries - Marina Dossena: Scotticisms in Johnson's Dictionary: a Lexicographer's Perceptions of a Sociolinguistic Change in Progress - Antonio Bertacca: Pronunciation and Social Status in

Modern English - Roberta Facchinetti: Social Commitment in Percival Leigh's *The Comic English Grammar* (1840) - Maria Teresa Prat Zagrebelsky: *Ethnic* rather than *Racial*: a "Politically Correct" and/or a "Scientifically Correct" Choice? Some Corpus-Based Reflections - David Hart: The Presence of Modal Forms in Powerful and Powerless Discourse: Some Examples - Rolando Bacchielli: The Origin and Development of O-termination: a case of Linguistic Social and Cultural Powers - Nicola Pantaleo: «There's something on the island». The Unconquered Hibernian in Somerville and Ross' *The Irish R.M.* - Seamus Taggart: Landscape, Language and Frontiers: the English Language and Power in the Context of the Irish Question - Ian Harvey: Pynchon vs. Harrison: They and [uz] - Responses to Authoritative Discourse in British and American Literature - Luisanna Fodde: Language Power and Language Restrictionism in the United States and Europe - Gabriella Mazzon: The Use of English as a Social Discriminator in Post-Independence India: the Sociolinguistics of *A Suitable Boy* by Vikram Seth - Cristiano Broccias: A Note on the History of «Power» - Paola Tornaghi: Bibliography on the Relationship between Language and Power - Maria Luisa Maggioni: Bibliography on the History of the English Language.

Dossena, Marina / Lass, Roger (eds.). 2004. *Methods and Data in English Historical Dialectology*. (Linguistic Insights. Studies in Language and Communication. Vol. 16.) Bern: Peter Lang.

(The volume contains a selection of papers presented at the First International Conference on English Historical Dialectology (ICEHD), organized at the University of Bergamo in September 2003. It includes papers on fundamental aspects of English historical dialectology, from Old English to Late Modern English. The papers discuss points in two thematically distinct but related sections, 'Methods' and 'Data'. The volume also includes the transcript of a debate on methodological issues, in which the main themes are the principles of historical investigation of geographical varieties, the new approaches provided by corpus linguistics and computer technology, and the need for greater awareness of textual reliability.

Contents:

Roger Lass: Ut custodiant litteras: Editions, Corpora and Witnesshood - Margaret Laing: Multidimensionality: Time, Space and Stratigraphy in Historical Dialectology - Keith Williamson: On Chronicity and Space(s) in Historical Dialectology - Mieko Ogura/William S.-Y. Wang: Dynamic

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Crystal, David. April 2005. *Pronouncing Shakespeare – the Globe Experiment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(How did Shakespeare's plays sound when they were originally performed? How can we know, and could the original pronunciation ever be recreated? For three days in June 2004 Shakespeare's Globe presented their production of *Romeo and Juliet* in original, Shakespearian pronunciation. In a blend of autobiography, narrative, and academic content, reflecting the unique nature of the experience, David Crystal recounts the first attempt in over 50 years to mount a full-length Shakespeare play in original pronunciation. Crystal begins by discussing the Globe theatre's approach to 'original practices', which has dealt with all aspects of Elizabethan stagecraft - except pronunciation. A large section is devoted to the nature of the Early Modern English sound system. There are reports of how the actors coped with the task of learning the pronunciation, how it affected their performances and how the audiences reacted.)

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