THE TRELLIS PAPERS

This is a series of working papers initially derived from a project designed to introduce Second Cycle students to research. TRELLIS is an acronym for "Teaching Research in English-Language Literatures, Intermediate Stage". The project seeks to build links between research carried out at postgraduate and professional level and the kind of research-oriented work that is offered to First and Second Cycle students. It includes a series of seven meetings -the *TRELLIS Seminars*- which has ben running in the Department of English at the UAM since 2002.

The overall goal of these sessions is twofold. On the one hand they aim at laying down a practical base for research. Eight critical texts from different research areas (history of science, linguistics, postmodernist fiction, fairytale, medieval epic, medieval narrative construction, anthropology) are studied and commented in depth for their special contribution to literature studies; in 2005 a new component (thematics) will be introduced. The focus is on broad, mostly interdisciplinary, mostly historical concerns. Attention is paid to argument construction, use of data, and layout. There is also some coaching in library and web searches and use of source materials.

On the other hand, the seminars concentrate on issues at the intersection between canonical literature, popular culture, and folklore. Because this intersection appears to view only when the researcher takes up a global perspective, when he/she engages a *field theory of text*, the three domains under scrutiny have occasionally been referred to as 'the Field triangle', and the term may continue in use so long as we remember that it is not meant to be exhaustive and that other areas of interaction will be found to exist and interact in the textual Field.

Among other tasks, and as part of their training, each participant in the TRELLIS Seminars is asked to prepare and deliver a 20-minute talk before an audience of students and researchers. So far, papers have dealt with problems of narrative and compositional structure, evolution, textual analysis or thematics in such areas as cartography, videogames, myth, fairytale, epic, children's literature, film, cartoons, or comix. It is the result of these talks that the present series was initially designed to publish.

Meanwhile, however, the project goes on and the 'trellis' concept has outgrown its original intention and now has the full function suggested by the word: an interlace of efforts which, in bringing together various types of research at different levels of complexity, seeks to reinforce and disseminate results, thus hoping to create a feedback loop throughout the three Cycles. One practical aim is to provide a flexible, reasonably speedy method of publication by editing each paper independently — though the possibility that some of these materials may eventually be collected in book form on thematic or other criteria is not to be ruled out.

The TRELLIS Papers will accordingly edit a variety of materials that will include not only the results of the TRELLIS Seminar but also work presented by Third Cycle students in the *English Literature Symposium for Postgraduate Students*, by speakers -both staff and students- in the *Liminality Seminars*, as well as other relevant work.

Three points need to be made here. First, the primary objective is to make available to the department various types of work carried out in it. Second, quality is a must in any paper submitted for inclusion in the series. Third, submissions to *The TRELLIS Papers* will be expected to conform to the editorial policy outlined in the second number of the series. This is not a matter 'for the editors to sort out'; on the contrary, it is an intrinsic responsibility of researchers to ensure that their work complies with some widely accepted set of conventions. The instructions provided in *TTP 2* are in agreement with international practice.

THE EDITORS

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A Style-Guide for Research Students in English Literature

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing about writing is one of the most complex disciplines. It is constantly exposed to ambiguity and contradiction in ways unimaginable in medicine or physics. This is because the instrument is turned upon itself as its own object of study. The unique nature of our discipline forces us to operate on a large variety of linguistic planes simultaneously. A misplaced comma suffices to alter the meaning of a relative clause. Inability to detect the use of free indirect style leads to total confusion between the character's and the narrator's view. Bad choice of lexicon plays havoc with our meaning. Failure to make explicit that we are talking about a title may be disastrous.

"Wuthering Heights is always bursting with badly suppressed violence". Are we writing about the book or about the house? If the first, we imply that violence is a constant in the narrative; if the second, we make an implicit contrast with Thrushcross Grange. The first statement easily leads to a discussion of lexicon and grammar as building up an atmosphere of tension; the second invites a consideration of the characters' actions. Two lines of analysis diverge from this ambiguous statement, and they may be totally different. Which of the two is the writer preparing us for?

Awareness of the function of italics should prevent the ambiguity: "Wuthering Heights" designates a house, "*Wuthering Heights*" refers to a book. But for a proper use of italics, all manner of confusions may crop up. Of course (we could say) context will clear things up and show whether the writer was referring to a novel or a house, to language or action. But will the reader be willing to be patient, or to cooperate? In a critical text, readers want to follow an argument which may be complex enough, and additional interference caused by the ambiguities of language is at best unwelcome and distracting, and may at worst destroy the coherence and sense of the argumentation itself. Readers will not be patient, nor should they be expected to. It is the writer's responsibility to smooth the way for them.

Much of the complexity we handle without great trouble. Even so, the margin for confusion is considerable, and one of the strategies employed to minimize it is a very precise way of presenting our work on the page. Just as we comply with standard editorial policies (for example, we must have a margin; our text must be divided into paragraphs; and so on), so we scrupulously follow approved guidelines of presentation without which our readers will not be able to understand what we mean.

Some (but only some) of these requirements are provided by the computer programme we use. By default, margins are 2,54 centimetres wide, and spacing is 1.0; the decision when to 'move' to the next page is made for us by default. But on many other matters we must decide ourselves: for example, the length and weight of a pause will depend solely on our choice of punctuation (comma, colon, semi-colon, full-stop, hyphen?).

This is another way of saying that punctuation and other conventions presented below convey meaning, or contribute to conveying it.

2. THE STYLE-GUIDE

Criticism is a genre of writing. It follows its own linguistic, cultural and generic codes. Failure to comply with these carries very real dangers, not least the possibility of not being understood.

There is much more to a style-guide than pedantic concerns: it outlines a veritable architecture of the text, and learning to use it involves becoming acquainted with expressive means that are peculiar to the genre of critical writing and that will dramatically enrich your range of expression (and therefore of ideas). It also fosters a sense of discipline which is crucial in research.

A style-guide is a tool specific to a philology. It is an agreed-upon shorthand. It is not only useful but necessary to allow us to condense vital (if often subtle) information into as little space as possible with as much clarity as possible. It not only pertains to writers but is also aware of readers' needs.

The point of a style-guide is to ensure that writers and readers share a set of conventions which facilitate communication across a complex and technical field. Ironically, there are many style manuals, guides, sheets and pages. The Modern Language Research Association (a British society to which many publishers and scholars belong) has pooled the preferences of many professional individuals and organizations into *The MHRA Style Book*, which contains a wealth of information under the following headings:

1. Preparation of the manuscript.
2. Spelling.
3. Abbreviations.
4. Punctuation.
5. Capitals.
6. Italics.
7. Dates, numbers, currency, and weights and measures.
8. Quotations and quotation marks.
9. Footnotes and endnotes.
10. References.
11. Preparation of book reviews.
12. Preparation of indexes.
13. Preparation of theses and dissertations

Each of these entries is further subdivided into sections. For instance, *2. Spelling* contains *2.1. Preferred spellings, 2.2. Accents, 2.3. Hyphens, 2.4. Quotations, 2.5. The possessive, 2.6. Place-names, 2.7. Personal names, 2.8. Slavonic names*. Clearly, most of these headings and sections are not of immediate use to you, though you should be aware that they exist and that the problems they confront are very real ones. For our purposes, we may concentrate on those headings which have to do mostly with a basic layout of text. The following pages offer an absolute minimum of near-universal conventions in Western culture.

Mastering them will allow you to structure an argument; to organize and rank your ideas; to keep several levels of thought distinct; to develop nuances of meaning that will be denied you without a solid grounding in the architecture of text; to give you a style, that is, a precise, coherent, reliable and elegant way of writing; and to carry not only clarity but also conviction and, so, to persuade your reader, not through vapid or emotional language but through the very clarity, strength and confidence that good structure inspires.

This guide will not teach you 'where to place your commas'; it will make you aware of the need to *decide* where and when to use certain conventions.

For a selection of useful style-guides, see Bibliography. Notice that conventions may vary from one guide to another. Consistency is important.

3. PUNCTUATION

Often the information you give must be *ranked* in importance, and punctuation helps (like syntax) to distinguish between main, secondary or marginal information.

3.1 The full-stop or period (.) ends a complete statement. If you only use full-stops, all your sentences will have exactly the same importance. You will not be able to subordinate certain data to certain other data; your reader will not know what your main point is; and your text may become insufferably monotonous (on the other hand, a judicious use of the full-stop may help convey solemnity, finality, or certain types of energetic rhythm).

3.2 The comma (,) creates a pause, but allows your statement to continue.

3.3 The semi-colon (;) ends the statement but allows for additional material; it suggests your point is not complete.

3.4 The colon (:) creates a moment of pause and prepares the reader for some piece of data announced beforehand.

3.5 The long dash (—) creates a pregnant pause — something unexpected is going to be said.

3.6 The short dash or hyphen (-) is used

a) in compounds (style-guide; all-British; the Home-Rule Bill; the 1914-1918 war)
b) in pairs, it has the function of a parenthesis to enclose marginal comments or secondary information, or to segregate some important material from the general flow of your argument

NOTE.- Many editors only use the long dash for this purpose. All you need is consistency.

3.7 The brackets or square brackets [ ] are used in pairs when you are quoting *verbatim* but need

a) to identify text which is not in the original you are quoting but which is necessary to understand the quotation (in discussing a landscape, the text may read "He pointed out that Coleridge would have been aware of it"; in your quotation this may become "He pointed out that Coleridge would have been aware of [that landscape]").
b) conversely, to delete a section of the quote which is not relevant to your purposes; in this last case we place the brackets around ellipsis or suspension marks as in [...].

3.8 Italics (*italics*) is a special letter type used

a) for titles of books, longer poems, plays, films, TV series, albums: Melville's *Moby-Dick*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek*, Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*.
b) to highlight foreign words: one speaks of a *déjà vu*, or of Latin *cerebrum*
c) for emphasis (also, see below)

NOTE. When you write longhand you cannot create italics; the standard method in this case is to underline (underscore) what you desire to appear in italics in your printed version.

NOTE. Some editors use italics to identify texts that were published on their own, inverted commas for texts that appeared as part of a collection.

3.9 Inverted commas (quotation marks) are used

a) to enclose the title of shorter poems, short stories, essays or articles: "Ode to the West Wind", "The Fall of the House of Usher", "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics" (notice the use of commas for the title of the article, of italics for the title of a long poem referred to in the article)
b) to quote (direct style)
c) to indicate a special, unusual, or not quite rigorous use of a word.

NOTE. Not to be used for emphasis (for this, see 3.8, 3.10)

NOTE. Some systems resort to the single inverted commas (' '), others to the double inverted commas (" "). All you need is to be consistent.
NOTE. You will sometimes need *both* sets of inverted commas, as when, inside a quotation, you refer to the title of a poem. In this case you may resort to the other pair. For instance, if you are quoting someone who referred to Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan", you may write:

"I have never understood 'Kubla Khan', he replied".

If the inner and outer commas follow one another, leave one space between them for clarity's sake: "He said he had never understood 'Kubla Khan' ".

NOTE. Some editors prefer the comma *inside* the quotation marks, some outside, and some are finnicky. Again , you should be consistent. But superscript numbers ([1]) must be placed *after* the punctuation mark.[2]

3.10 Emphasis

If it cannot be conveyed linguistically (e.g. by means of constructions such as "Hamlet did act like a madman", "It is this aspect of the theory that is suspect"), emphasis is to be conveyed by italics, never by means of inverted commas. Needless to say, no exclamation marks should be used in critical writings. In general, emphatic and emotional language is frowned upon by scholars; we expect an argument, not a plea or a diatribe.

4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

4.1 Books.- A bibliography is a system that allows the reader to identify in an unmistakable manner each work you have used. You must carefully list all the books and articles you use, in alphabetical order according to the family name of the author.

A typical bibliographical entry for a book has six positions and looks as follows (notice and respect the punctuation and typography):

1 Name **2** SURNAME **3** date **4** *Title of Book*. **5** Place of publication: **6** publisher

E.g., Brian MCHALE 1987 *Postmodernist Fiction*. London: Methuen

As usual, different editors have different methods. Some prefer the surname to come before the name, some do not capitalize surnames, some prefer the publisher to appear before the place of publication, some do not use the colon; the possibilities are many. The model above is sound, simple, and clear.

4.2 Articles.- For articles published in journals or books the standard entry has nine positions (as before, permutations often occur). Notice that journals tend to appear three or four times a year. It is customary to speak of each issue as a *number*, of the total for each year as a *volume.* Notice and respect the punctuation:

1 Name **2** SURNAME **3** "Title of Article", **4** in **5** *Title of Journal* **6** volume number: **7** issue number **8** (year), **9** page numbers for initial and final page

E.g., Myles DILLON "The Hindu Act of Truth in Celtic Tradition", in *Modern Philology* 44:3 (1947), 137-140

NOTE. Traditionally, nouns, adjectives, verbs and personal pronouns are capitalized in titles, though there is some wrangling over whether, e.g., prepositions should be so treated. A convention of capitalizing only the initial word (the Spanish convention) is now gaining some ground.

5. REFERENCING

When you quote a writer, or when you refer to a specific work of his/hers, in the body of your text, you need to give your reader the source of your quotation or reference. For this, the following three-position referencing-system allows you to minimize interruptions that would disrupt your reader's concentration (notice and respect the punctuation):

(1 Surname **2** year: **3** page-number)

E.g., It has long been known that certain correspondences of vocabulary and inflection exist between Indo-Iranian and Italo-Celtic languages (Dillon 1947:137).

With this, the reader knows exactly where to go to in your Bibliography, how to look for the article in question, and how to check your quote and, if necessary, how to find fault with you for misquoting or for improper use of quotation! The *full* reference, of course, must be given in the Bibliography (see 4). If two of your authors bear the same surname, you may distinguish them by the initials of their first names: "T.Turner", "V.Turner".

6. QUOTATIONS

Quotations should be used only where the exact words of the original are particularly apt for what you want to illustrate. Keep them as short as possible — often a short phrase or a few words are enough. If a longer quotation (more than a line's length, say) is really necessary, put it in its own indented space, without quotation marks; you have an example of this in 5. Take the following, much more complex instance and notice the points below:

> The ritual-dominant school has been important in literary criticism, [...], and it led for a time to the suggestion that authors merely repeated a supposed pattern of events transformed into modern dress: "The myth and ritual approach seems to suggest that the artist is no more than the torpid holder of the pen which the myth and ritual pattern in some arcane fashion guides" (Weisinger 1968:137). But more sympathetic acceptance of the school's principles has produced many excellent accounts of the mythological patterning underlying great literary works of art (see Vickery 1966; and Burrows, Lapides, and Shawcross). In the hands of Northrop Frye, such an approach has been developed into a very sensitive tool for analyzing mythic seasonal patterns in correlation with types of literary texts (Doty 1986:77).

1) We have *indented* the quotation to make it stand out from our own text.

2) We have used suspension marks in line 1 to leave out the words "as will be discussed in Chapter 6". These words clearly are not part of the *idea* expressed by Doty; but it is vital that readers know that a fragment of the text has been omitted — otherwise we might create the mistaken impression that Doty is making an arbitrary statement without discussion.

3) Doty uses double inverted commas for direct quotation in the body of his text (lines 2-4). He also uses the standard referencing system (surname, date, page number) for the quote, or simply surname and date for the works that deal with the central idea (matched, of course, by the full reference in his Bibliography). Notice that the full stop that closes his quote follows, rather than precedes, the parenthesis "(Weisinger 1968:137)".

4) Doty has chosen to omit the date for "Burrows, Lapides, and Shawcross"; he can do this because only one book appears under these names in his Bibliography and therefore it is unmistakeable (it is, however, sensible to add the year in all cases, as this gives the reader a more precise information at no real cost).

5) The ideas contained in the quote need not be correct. Doty's reference to "great literary works of art" is objectionable, for it implies that not-so-great works of art do not contain that "mythological patterning" — it should take but a moment's reflection to realize that this is not necessarily true (why should minor literary works not respond to mythic conventions? If anything, the converse might well be the case). This, however, does not mean that the entire quotation is false or rejectable, only that when quoting it one might want to make a parenthetical remark (e.g., in a footnote) in order to take a distance from some of the writer's views.

6) Incidentally, since we have quoted Doty, we oblige ourselves to provide the full reference, in case some reader might be interested in following up on this topic (even though we used it only as an example). You will find it in the Bibliography on page 11.

7. USE OF SECONDARY MATERIALS, AND PLAGIARISM

The main point to bear in mind is that what you say should be your own. Remember always to acknowledge the work and its author correctly. This means (a) a full and correct entry in your bibliography (see above), and (b) where you quote, or even use the ideas of someone else paraphrased in your own words, give page and chapter references. Otherwise, you will be plagiarizing (i.e. stealing) someone else's ideas. This may be penalized by your teachers, or may lead to out-and-out rejection of your papers by publishers. One single instance of plagiarism may mark you out for the rest of your studies or even of your career.

Use of secondary materials, in any case, needs to have a purpose; it is not enough simply to present someone's idea and leave it at that — it should be for the purpose of supporting or contrasting with your own view.

We have also to consider the correct way of presenting these materials. One fundamental rule applies: when discussing a text, every point you make must be supported or illustrated by reference to the text you are discussing. "Reference" or "citation" need not be in the form of **quotation** (see 6. above). It is often enough to refer to the section of the novel, by citing incidents or developments which illustrate what you are wanting to say.

8. WRITING

One usually starts by taking notes towards some possible paper or papers. Jot down ideas, questions, problems, possible answers and solutions. The more you do this, the more often ideas will occur to you. Do not improvise your way towards the final version of your paper. At some point you will have to look over your notes and write down a *plan* of your paper.

Select from among your more promising notes, and write down a *hypothesis*. Make sure you have enough data and ideas to formulate, develop and defend it.

A hypothesis need not be an earth-shattering idea. It may be something as simple as detecting a problem in a critical text, or proposing an interpretation of a poem, or applying a theoretical tool to a novel, or comparing two or more texts to establish similarities and differences, and thus to define or identify the precise characteristics of a text or a character or a theme.

In any case, a hypothesis need not be correct, but it must invite agreement. It need not convince, but it should be *persuasive*. That is why careful argumentation, proper use of sources, accurate quoting and rigorous use of the writing conventions provided in this guide are decisive.

The test of your paper is in the *writing*. Formulation is crucial, and so your writing should be precise, because that is the only way you and your supervisor can detect flaws, and detecting these is the first step towards correcting them — but you will not see them unless your writing is precise. Nebulous, incoherent or ungrammatical language destroys ideas. On the other hand, very often ideas emerge in the very act of thoughtful writing.

In mathematics you work with precision instruments: numbers, equations, formulas, operations. In the study of literature, *language* is your precision instrument. The wrong word, a misplaced comma, a syntactic error, or simply vague language will plunge your ideas into chaos.

Never use suspension marks (...) when you mean "and so forth". Never write "and so forth" or "etc." if you can help it.

9. ESSAY STRUCTURE

Make sure your essay at least contains:

a) an initial premise (thesis)
b) a development of this
c) a conclusion or summing up which agrees with your thesis
d) a bibliography

10. TITLE

You need a suitable title to convey your thesis. Choosing your title is an extremely delicate operation; a good choice may mean you are half-way towards a good paper.

Your title need not be "poetic" and can very well be prosaic. It is not its emotional quality but its precision that counts. The title should be *informative* as to the intentions of your essay. It should be a *faithful* reflection of the actual contents of your essay.

11. INTERNET MATERIALS

One should always be critical of one's sources, but extreme care should be taken with those found on the Internet. Anyone can hang a webpage or an article on the Internet, without passing through the filters and selection procedures that are standard in the field of printed publications. As a result, quality is all too often entirely lacking in these products, and all too often they are put there by students or researchers whose work was turned down by a lecturer or a publisher. Computer illiteracy -the inability to evaluate and distinguish good from bad research, valid from bogus information on the Net- is nowadays recognized a serious problem in both the US and the UK. Your own work can be entirely misled by reliance on these sources. Always make sure that your source is backed by a reliable press or academic institution.

Bibliography

(If your bibliography carries two well differentiated sets of items, you may design two separate bibliographical lists, as done below)

A) STYLE GUIDES

Journals often carry their own instructions, which would-be contributors should adhere to. Some of the most widespread style guides are the following (notice that some of them are not attributed to one particular author. Where this is the case, they are listed alphabetically by title. The initial article does not count for alphabetical purposes):

— FOWLER, Henry W. 1927 *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (repr. of 1st edn). Oxford: Oxford UP 2002

— GOWERS, Sir Ernest 1948 *The Complete Plain Words*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1978

— GIBALDI, Joseph 1995 *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America (5th edn.), or:
www.mla.org

— *The MHRA Style Book: Notes for Authors, Editors, and Writers of Theses*. London: Modern Humanities Research Association 1991 (4th edn)

— *Style Sheet for Authors and Editors*. Mouton de Gruyter:
Http://elex.amu.edu.pl/ifa/sap/style.html

— *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS):
www.press.uchicago.edu

B) OTHERS

DOTY, William G. 1986 *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals*. Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press.